

***Application
for
United States Patent***

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that We, Irah H. Donner, Zachary J. Donner and Jason J. Donner

have invented certain new and useful improvements in

***SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REALLOCATING AND/OR UPGRADING AND/OR
SELLING TICKETS, OTHER EVENT ADMITTANCE MEANS, GOODS AND/OR
SERVICES***

of which the following is a full, clear and exact description:

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REALLOCATING AND/OR
UPGRADING AND/OR SELLING TICKETS, OTHER EVENT
ADMITTANCE MEANS, GOODS AND/OR SERVICES

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Related Applications

This application is a continuation-in-part application of, and claims priority to, U.S. application serial number 09/910,821 filed on July 24, 2001 and entitled "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REALLOCATING AND/OR UPGRADING AND/OR REWARDING TICKETS, OTHER EVENT ADMITTANCE MEANS, GOODS AND/OR SERVICES," which in turn claims priority to both U.S. provisional application serial number 60/220,218 filed on July 24, 2000 and entitled "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REALLOCATING AND/OR UPGRADING TICKETS OR OTHER EVENT ADMITTANCE MEANS", and U.S. provisional application serial number 60/226,594 filed on August 21, 2000 and entitled "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REALLOCATING AND/OR UPGRADING TICKETS OR OTHER EVENT ADMITTANCE MEANS", and the details of all the above applications are hereby incorporated by reference.

25

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to purchasing and provisioning items or services
5 online for reallocating and/or upgrading and/or
rewarding tickets and/or other goods/services,
and more particularly, to a system, method, and
computer readable medium storing computer-
executable instructions for upgrading,
10 reallocating, purchasing, and/or being rewarded
items or services including event tickets,
concessions, and/or merchandise over a data
communication network and provisioning these
purchases for, for example, reallocating and/or
15 upgrading tickets.

Provisioning, as defined herein, includes in
whole or in part, the process of effectuating
and/or facilitating the processing of a
transaction, including, for example, the sale
20 and/or transfer and/or reallocation of tickets,
goods, services, and the like, for movies,
theatre, shows, sporting events, cultural events,
and other non-event related purchases, services,
and the like.

Background Of The Invention

U.S. Patent 6,052,629 to Leatherman et al.
(Leatherman), incorporated herein by reference,
is directed to an Internet capable browser
5 dispenser architecture. As shown in prior art
FIG. 1 (FIG. 1 of Leatherman), the system of
Leatherman includes a plurality of fuel
dispensers 12, each having at least two fueling
positions and acting as a point of sale (POS)
10 interface. Connected to the fuel dispensers 12
is a main service station store 16, a local
server 18, a convenience store 20, a number of
restaurants 22, and a car wash 24, as well as
other remote servers 26 via the Internet.
15 Basically, the system of Leatherman provides gas
station customers with access to a server on a
local network and remote sites via the Internet.
With this arrangement, the gas station customers
may purchase services at the POS dispensers and
20 be subject to advertisements transmitted thereto.
However, while Leatherman discusses purchasing
items at a gas station, it makes no disclosure of
effectively provisioning and/or performing
transactions in the entertainment and/or
25 ticketing industry.

U.S. Patent 5,618,045 to Kagan et al.
(Kagan), incorporated herein by reference,
relates to an interactive game system. As
5 depicted in prior art FIG. 2 (FIG. 1 of Kagan),
the interactive game system 610 of Kagan includes
three playing devices 612, 614, and 616, which
communicate via a wireless local area network.
Communication is effected utilizing short-range
10 radio, infrared, or ultra-sonic signals. As
shown in prior art FIG. 3 (FIG. 2 of Kagan), each
playing device includes a processor 718, an
interface 720, a transmitter 722, a receiver 724
and a display 726. Using these components, a
15 player's actions are transmitted to and received
by another player's playing device.

U.S. Patent 5,636,920 to Shur et al. (Shur),
incorporated herein by reference, relates to a
20 sports team organizer. In prior art FIG. 4 (FIG.
1 of Shur), a portable computing device for
organizing a sports team includes an input device
812, a processor 814, a memory 816, a number of
stored programs 818, and an output device 820.
25 With these elements, the organizing system allows

a team roster, a starting lineup, and a number of drills to be generated.

U.S. Patent 5,647,795 to Stanton (Stanton), incorporated herein by reference, relates to portable computerized pari-mutuel sports entertainment system. In prior art FIG. 5 (FIG. 1 of Stanton), the system includes a computer 911 and conductor 916, a video cassette recorder 912 with video tape 917, a television set 913, keypads 914, and printers 915. The computer 911 operates as a main computing server, and includes a motherboard 920, a memory card 921, and a number of graphics and other serial cards 922, 923, and 924. With this system, bets are entered from remote locations with keypads 914 and stored in computer 911. After a race, winnings are collected at the cashiers' windows (keypads 914).

The above cited patents are relevant from the perspective that wireless devices are gaining more popularity in today's society.

U.S. Patent 5,794,207 to Walker et al. (Walker), incorporated herein by reference, relates to a method and apparatus for a cryptographically assisted commercial network system designed to facilitate buyer-driven

conditional purchase offers. In prior art FIG. 6 (FIG. 1 of Walker), the system includes seller interfaces 300, central controller 200, and buyer node 400. A number of modems 350 and 450
5 facilitate connection to central controller 200. Using these components, a buyer communicates a binding purchase offer to a number of sellers. In response, the sellers have the option to accept a purchase offer and thus bind the
10 corresponding buyer to a contract. Nevertheless, Walker makes no mention of allowing redemption of the purchases at a point of sale location upon identification or verification of the purchaser or of the purchase.

15 FIGS. 7-9 show a prior art radio frequency (RF) transmission system 100, as disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,819,172, incorporated herein by reference, for transmitting information from one of a plurality of originating processors A-N to at
20 least one of a plurality of destination processors (A-N) which may be transported during operation. The system 100 includes at least one gateway switch 150 that stores information received from one of the at least one originating processor
25 prior to transmission of the information to the at least one destination processor; a RF information

transmission network 130 for transmitting stored
information received from one of the at least one
gateway switch 150 by RF transmission to at least
one destination processor; and at least one
5 interface switch 162 that connects a gateway
switch 150 to the RF transmission network 100 and
transmits stored information received from one of
the at least one gateway switch 150 to the RF
information transmission network 100.

10 The information is transmitted to a receiving
interface switch by the electronic mail system in
response to an address of the receiving interface
switch which has been added to the information
originated by the originating processor by either
15 the originating processor or gateway switch 14.
The information is transmitted from the receiving
interface switch to the RF information
transmission network 130 with an address of the
destination processor to receive the information
20 which has been added by either the originating
processor, a gateway switch or the receiving
interface switch.

More particularly, FIG. 8 illustrates a block
diagram of the connection between a plurality of
25 gateway switches with mailboxes 150 in different
electronic mail systems to the RF information

transmission network 160. Multiple gateway
switches with mailboxes 150 from a single
electronic mail system 1-N may be connected to
each interface switch 162 instead of the
5 connection of a single gateway switch with a
mailbox to a single interface switch as
illustrated. A plurality of interface switches 162
connect information transmitted from at least one
electronic mail system as illustrated in FIG. 7.
10 Optionally, a plurality of electronic mail systems
1-N are connected to a data input port of the RF
information transmission system which is
preferably hub switch 116. The dotted line
communication paths 163 illustrate optional
15 information transmissions in which information
from a plurality of different electronic mail
systems is concentrated at a single interface
switch 304. The dotted line communication paths
161 illustrate connections to additional gateway
20 switches with mailboxes 150 within electronic mail
systems 1-N.

The interface switches 162 function as a
security check to determine that information
transmissions originating from a gateway switch
with mailbox 150 represent transmissions which
25 should be coupled to a hub switch 116 of the RF

information transmission network 160. The security check is performed by the interface switch 162 comparing the identification number of the RF receiver 119 which has been added by either
5 an originating processor A-N or a gateway switch with mailboxes 150 with permissible identification numbers or the interface switch performing the addition of the identification number.

The interface switch 162 also removes
10 information added by the electronic mail system 1-N to the information originated by the originating processor A-N from the stored information received from one of the gateway switches 14, and adds information used by the RF information
15 transmission network 130 during transmission of the information originated at the originating processor to a RF receiver 119 in the RF information transmission network 130 which receives the information and transfers it to the
20 destination processor A-N. Additionally, the interface switch 162 encodes data, which is required to format the display of the cathode ray tube (CRT) of the destination processor for the electronic mail system to which the destination
25 processor is connected, in the form of a character or characters which are decoded by either the RF

receiver 119 or the destination processor A-N.
This information is added in decoded form back to
the information which is processed by the
destination processor with a format of the
5 electronic mail system to which the destination
processor A-N is connected.

The interface switches 162 also function to
store information which has been stored by at
least one gateway switch 150 that is received from
10 a plurality of originating processors, and
assemble the information from a plurality of
originating processors into a packet having a
predetermined format and transmit the packet to
the hub switch 116 within the RF information
15 transmission network 160. The hub switch is the
preferable node in the RF information transmission
network to which communications from the gateway
switches 150 should be transmitted as a
consequence of it having jurisdiction over both
20 local access and transport area (LATA) switches
150 and the local switches 112 in the RF
information transmission network, which results in
lesser network overhead.

The hub switch 116 receives the packet from
25 the receiving interface switch 162 and
disassembles the packet into information from the

plurality of originating processors. The originating processors are either within a single electronic mail system such as system 1, or from a plurality of electronic mail systems, such as

5 systems 1-N, or from outside of any electronic mail system from at least one additional processor 312 which is connected directly to interface switch 162 to originate information to be transmitted to a destination processor A-N in an

10 electronic mail system as described below. The RF information transmission network 130 transmits the disassembled information from the hub switch 116, including the identification number of the RF receiver 119 transferring information, to the

15 destination processor A-N to a local switch 112 storing the file identified by the identification number and any destination of the RF receiver in the RF information transmission network to which the information and identification number is to be

20 transmitted by the RF information transmission network, and adds any destination of the RF receiver to the information. The RF information transmission network, in response to any added destination, transmits the information and

25 identification number to the destination for RF

broadcast to the RF receiver 119 for transfer to the destination processor A-N.

5 The information is transmitted to a receiving interface switch 162 from one or more gateway switches 150 by one or more electronic mail systems 1-N in response to an address of the receiving interface switch which has been added to the information originated by the originating processor by either the originating processor or
10 gateway switch. The information is transmitted from the receiving interface switch 162 to the RF information transmission network with an address of the destination processor, such as a name of a user of the destination processor A-N, to receive
15 the information which has been added by either the originating processor A-N, a gateway switch 150 or the receiving interface switch 304.

20 Preferably, the address of the receiving interface switch is a code word, such as "TF-MOBOX", which is recognized throughout the electronic mail system when appended to information as directing the information to be transmitted to the interface switch 304. The address of the destination processor is preferably
25 the identification number of the RF receiver 119 within the RF information transmission network

160. The address of the receiving interface switch may be added to the information originated by the originating processor, by a gateway switch 150 or by the originating processor A-N. The address of
5 the receiving interface switch 162 may be added to the information by matching an identification of the destination processor A-N which may be the name of the individual utilizing the processor or some other information to add an address of an
10 interface switch such as the aforementioned "TF-MOBOX" stored with the matched identification of the destination processor to the information as the address of the receiving interface switch.

Alternatively, the originating processor may
15 be used to add the address of the receiving interface switch 150 by inputting the address of the receiving interface switch (TF-MOBOX) along with an identification of the destination processor A-N (name of recipient using the
20 processor).

The originating processor A-N may also add
the address of the receiving interface switch 162 by matching an identification of the destination processor (name of the user of the processor) with
25 a stored identification of a destination processor and adding an address of the interface switch (TF-

MOBOX) stored with the matched identification of the destination processor to the information as the address of the receiving interface switch.

5 The identification number may be added to the information originated by the originating processor or, alternatively, maybe added by the originating processor by matching an identification of the destination processor (the name of the user of the processor) with a stored
10 identification of a destination processor (the authorized user of the destination processor) and adding an identification number stored with the matched identification of the destination processor to the information as the identification
15 number of the RF receiver 119. Alternatively, the aforementioned matching process may be performed by either the gateway switch 150 or the interface switch 304. The additional processors 312 originates information from outside of any
20 electronic mail system.

Processors 312 provide an address of at least one destination processor in an electronic mail system, such as the name of the user, to receive information transmitted by the RF information
25 transmission system 160, or an identification number of the RF receiver 119 receiving

information and transferring the information to the destination processor. The interface switch 162 which receives the information from each processor 312 adds information used by the RF information transmission network 130 during transmission of the information to the RF receiver 119 receiving the information in the same manner as described above with respect to the interface switch 304.

Processors 312 are only required to have a telephone modem and support programming to format information for RF transmission to a destination processor A-N within any one of one or more electronic mail systems 1-N. The processors 312 are not required to have the necessary electronic mail system software present in originating processors A-N or interconnections with an electronic mail system. As a result of the connection to the interface switch 304, information originating from the additional processors 312 may be transmitted by RF transmission to a destination processor A-N within any one or a plurality of electronic mail systems with the user of the processor 312, the processor 312 or the interface switch 162 only having to supply an identification number of the receiver

119 to input information into the RF information transmission system 130 for RF transmission to a destination processor.

5 The difference between originating information by one of the additional processors 312 outside of any electronic mail system and originating information by one of the processors within one of the electronic mail systems is that the direct connection of the additional processor
10 to the interface switch 162 eliminates the requirement for the adding of an address of the interface switch 162 which is required by the electronic mail systems to forward the information to the interface switch where necessary formatting
15 of the information to be compatible with the RF information transmission system is performed. The interface switch 162 packetizes information originating from the additional processors 312 in the same manner as described above with respect to
20 information originating from within an electronic mail system.

 Information from within an electronic mail system and originating from additional processors 312 outside of the electronic mail system may be
25 formatted into the same packets which are forwarded to the hub switch 116. Additionally,

interface switch 162 may be connected only to the additional processors 312 to provide an interface only for processors outside of any electronic mail system to destination processors A-N within one or
5 more electronic mail systems 1-N. The only information which is necessary to be inputted by the additional processors 312 is the address of the destination processor (user of the processor). The addition of the identification number of the
10 receiver 119 may be added by matching of an identification of the destination processor with stored destination processors within the additional processor 312, or the interface switch 162 with an identification number of the receiver
15 119 stored with an identification of a destination processor A-N used as an identification of the destination processor upon a match having been made.

Prior art FIGs. 7-9, however, do not
20 generally relate to, for example, providing an integrated or combination real time and polled electronic messaging system, method and/or a computer readable medium storing computer-executable instructions for enabling e-mail
25 messages and/or other data messages and/or services to be transmitted and/or received via a

wireless communications device on either a real time and/or polled basis

5 In recent years, technological advance and consumer demand together have made wireless messaging and related services (e.g., eLinkSM provided by Motient Corporation, Reston, VA) increasingly popular. These services allow users to, for example, send and receive e-mail messages, as well as provide other messaging services such
10 as paging and faxing. Such e-mail messages are generally received on either a polled or real time basis, where the user has to select the preferred delivery method.

In a polled delivery scheme, the user's
15 existing Internet e-mail account is "extended" via a wireless communications device. For example, in the case of eLinkSM, messages are retrieved from, for example, a Post Office Protocol 3 (POP3) or Internet Messaging Access Protocol 4 (IMAP4)
20 server and forwarded to a user's wireless device. Using a wireless device, users can access their Internet mailbox either automatically by, for example, setting one or more times at which they wish to receive their messages, or manually by,
25 for example, clicking a "Get Messages" or similar icon. Other ways of accessing the mailbox are also

optionally possible. In a real time delivery scheme, user's are generally provided a new, unique e-mail address, which obviously provides the user with an e-mail account that is separate from their desktop e-mail account. For example, in the case of eLinkSM, user's are provided a unique e-mail address having the form <username>@2way.net. Other message forms and/or domain names may also optionally be utilized. Such wireless schemes also generally allow users to respond to e-mails in a way such that they appear as though they are originated from the user's e-mail system residing on their desktop PC.

Accordingly, the above prior art is cited as background, none of which relates to the reallocating and/or reprovisionsing and/or upgrading and/or rewarding of tickets at events or other goods and services as described in connection with the detailed description below.

Summary of the Invention

Driven by a widespread understanding of the Internet's capabilities, the power of electronic commerce, and advances in wireless technologies

and devices, mobile commerce (m-commerce) is rapidly approaching the business forefront. According to independent research findings, m-commerce-the conduct of business and services
5 over portable, wireless devices-will soon be a dominant force in business and society. For example:

- 10 • IDC, an information technology research firm, reports that 70 percent of all wireless subscribers worldwide will access data applications via their phones by 2002.
- 15 • The investment firm Robinson Humphrey predicts that, in the US, 50 percent of Internet hits will originate from wireless devices by 2004.
- 20 • The Yankee Group, a telecommunications research firm, projects that by 2004 more than 40 percent of wireless users in the US will access Internet content directly from their mobile devices.

The viability of these projections depends on the power of the underlying technology drivers and the
25 attractiveness of m-commerce applications. To compete in a marketplace dominated by wireless

devices, businesses must devise effective m-commerce strategies. Building successful strategies begins by recognizing the forces driving m-commerce's emergence.

5

The US Federal Communication Commission's auctioning of personal communication-service spectrum space in the mid-1990s triggered the current rush to wireless communication methods. Wireless communication now encompasses not only telephones but appliances, including personal digital assistants (PDAs).

10

Internet use has grown on the strength of PC networks. According to Yankee Group projections, the installed base of PCs will reach 500 million by 2003, as FIG. 10 shows. This huge base is essential to continued growth in electronic commerce and other communications applications. Moreover, because these systems will have greater power and storage capability, as well as the best ever price-performance ratios, more powerful and sophisticated applications will likely emerge for desktop computing and the Internet.

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Although these expectations are impressive, PCs still have two limiting characteristics. First, users must sit in front of them. Second, even portable-notebook PCs have to load software, dial
5 into and connect with a network service provider, and await completion of the handshaking process before they can launch an Internet application. This sequence is understandable, but at best it seems a tolerable nuisance. Hence, the dominant
10 applications are still those that are worth the trouble it takes for a user to follow this access sequence or, at least, to keep the computer and applications running.

15 The aggregate PC installation is substantial, but even more mobile communication devices are in use. The Gartner Group and other research firms project that by 2004, the installed base of mobile phones worldwide will exceed 1 billion more than
20 twice the number of PCs. In addition, the number of other wireless mobile devices will also increase dramatically. Wireless PDA use will more than triple in the next three years. Unlike PCs, these wireless devices require no boot sequence,
25 so people can use them as soon as they turn them

on-making them attractive for quick-hit applications.

5 Just as the transmission control protocol/Internet protocol and the general purpose browser were principal drivers of Internet growth, letting disparate devices interconnect and communicate, similar factors will simplify the interconnectivity and communication of
10 heterogeneous wireless devices. As FIG. 11 shows, mobile network carriers have relied on a variety of incompatible wireless access standards. Recently, however, a common communications technology and uniform interface standard for
15 presenting and delivering wireless services on mobile devices-wireless application protocol (WAP)-have emerged.

20 WAP specifications include a microbrowser; scripting similar to JavaScript; access functions; and layered communication specifications for sessions, transport, and security. These specifications enable interface-independent and interoperable applications. Most wireless handset
25 and device manufacturers, as well as several

service and infrastructure providers, have adopted the WAP standard.

5 Current access technologies, including TDMA (time division multiple access), CDMA (code division multiple access), and GSM (Global System for Mobile Communication), transmit at 9.6 to 19.2 Kbps. These speeds are dramatically slower than the dial-up rates of desktop PCs connecting to the Internet. Although m-commerce is possible at these bandwidth rates, the slow speeds are not conducive to creating widespread business or consumer participation.

15 3G (third-generation) wireless technology will also be available. In addition to having greater bandwidth rates, with speeds up to 2 Mbps, 3G will support multimedia transmission. Integrating voice, data, and one- or two-way video will let m-commerce run over any wireless device.

25 M-commerce applications fall into three main categories: transaction management, digital content delivery, and telemetry services. Users will increasingly initiate a wide range of business transactions from mobile devices. Online

shopping sites tailored to mobile phones and PDAs including browsing, selection, purchase, payment, and delivery-have already emerged. These sites include all the necessary shopping features, such as online catalogs, shopping carts, and back office functions. Online booksellers are among the firms that have already implemented wireless shopping transactions. Another class of m-commerce transactions involves using wireless devices to initiate and pay for purchases and services in real time. These kinds of transactions will likely increase as users gain the capability-and become comfortable enough-to manage them. The highest m-commerce transaction volume will probably occur in micro transactions. When individuals reach for their e-cash-equipped mobile phones or PDAs-rather than coins-to settle transactions such as subway fees, widespread use of digital cash will be a reality.

Digital content delivery uses the wireless channel's distribution characteristics. These m-commerce activities include information browsing-instant retrieval of status information
5 (weather, transit schedules, sports scores, ticket availability, and market prices)-and directory services. The CNN Wireless news subscription service and the UPS PDA-linked package tracking and locator service are representative of emerging
10 content delivery services.

Digital products easily transport to and from wireless devices. Hence, downloading entertainment products-for example, MP3 music-is
15 likely to become even more commonplace when 3G arrives. Transferring software, high resolution images, and full-motion advertising messages will also become common activities. The emergence of high-quality display screens and greater bandwidth
20 will undoubtedly trigger the development of innovative video applications. Individuals will use wireless devices to access, retrieve, store, and display high-resolution video content for entertainment, product demonstration, and distance
25 learning.

The transmission and receipt of status, sensing, and measurement information-telemetry services-form the basis for a wide range of new applications involving mobile devices.

5 Innovations in this area let people use wireless phones and appliances to communicate with various devices from their homes, offices, or in the field. For instance, delivery drivers will "ping" intelligent dispensing machines or store computers

10 to determine where their rolling inventory is needed most or which locations need immediate service. Similarly, users will transmit messages to activate remote recording devices or service systems.

15

Active m-commerce applications function only when someone directly initiates them by transmitting payment details, requesting information, receiving specific content, or

20 retrieving status information. In contrast, passive applications occur without the user taking any action-for example, the automatic collection of toll charges with dedicated cash cards. Integrating digital cash into mobile devices would

25 make these cash cards unnecessary. These wireless devices would facilitate and record payment of

toll, mass-transit, fast-food, and other transactions without the user authorizing or entering identification information for each individual transaction. Users could arrange to have their cash chips update automatically by directing the wireless device to contact their money source and download additional digital cash whenever necessary.

Popular in Europe, short messages text messages, up to 160 characters in length, that show up on the recipient's display as they arrive-are examples of passive content delivery. As digital convergence becomes more commonplace, all forms of mail will passively go to wireless devices, including digitized voice mail, fax documents, and e-mail. Passive security, intrusion, and emergency telemetry services will refine the monitoring of facilities and individuals. Any unusual event or unacceptable condition will trigger user notification, regardless of location. Airlines are testing technology that will let them alert passengers, especially frequent fliers, to seat upgrades, schedule changes, and so on, through wireless devices. Some airlines already have prototype

telemetry systems that transmit this kind of information to passengers as soon as they enter the airport or pass near a kiosk-like device.

5 Passive m-commerce telemetry is the foundation of still another form of interactive marketing. Stores will be able to market their products and services by transmitting promotional coupons and messages to passers by: "Come in and enjoy a
10 complimentary cup of our new coffee blend," or "Get half off, if you make your purchase within the next 30 minutes." This type of marketing may give rise to a new challenge: managing m-junk messages without turning off your wireless device.

15 The technology to facilitate m-commerce is within reach, even as barriers to its development fall away. Applications and wireless devices promise to evolve together, each driving the
20 introduction of innovative and powerful features in the other. The opportunity and challenge is for business to develop strategies that capitalize on the strengths of mobile commerce, thereby helping it to compete in an increasingly digital
25 marketplace. The greatest challenge to structuring such a strategy may be creating the

5 innovations that will meet the needs and expectations of consumers and commercial participants. Additional details regarding the above may be found in James A. Senn, The Emergence of M-Commerce, IEEE COMPUTER (December 2000), incorporated herein by reference and all references cited there incorporated herein by reference.

10 Mobile device and computer users increasingly face the management of many computing devices. One reason is the expansion of computing environments in the home and office, as printers, scanners, digital cameras, and other peripherals are integrated into networked environments.

15 Another reason is the proliferation of mobile devices such as laptop and palm-sized computers, cellular phones, and pagers. Because these devices trade functionality for suitable form factors and low power consumption, they are necessarily "peripheral-poor" and must therefore

20 establish connections to neighboring devices for storage, faxing, high-speed network access, and printing. It is easy to become frustrated when dealing with the configuration and interaction of

25 such a multitude of devices. Service discovery technologies were developed to reduce this

frustration and to simplify the use of mobile devices in a network by allowing them to be "discovered," configured, and used by other devices with a minimum of manual effort. Although
5 most of these "service discovery suites" promise similar functionality•namely, reduced configuration hassles, improved device cooperation, and automated discovery of required services•they come at the problem from different
10 philosophical and technical approaches. Since none of these technologies is a superset of the others and none is mature enough to dominate the market, interoperation among them will require bridging mechanisms. Five competing technologies
15 are described that may be used in conjunction with the present invention, however, other technologies may also or alternatively be used.

Thus, to address the above and other needs of
20 the prior art, it is a feature and advantage of the present invention to provide users with the ability to be awarded, reallocated, upgraded and/or reprovisioned purchase items including tickets and concessions and/or other merchandise
25 and/or services online. By doing so, the present invention allows these users to proceed directly

to the event and/or receive the goods and/or services, thereby bypassing any box offices. In addition, the present invention allows purchases of a variety of items such as movie tickets, concessions, movie merchandise, and/or other goods or services using the processes and architecture described herein or other standard platforms. The present invention facilitates these purchases and the subsequent provisioning thereof by utilizing an identification device associated with a user's account which, in turn, is readable by a reader at a point of sale location for verifying the purchases made by the user. The identification device can be, for example, a smart card and/or wireless device with infrared and/or bluetooth enabled, or other standard wireless device, including those described herein.

It is also another optional feature and advantage, alone or in combination with one or more other features, of the present invention to facilitate the provisioning of demographic information to program sponsors. By having each user register demographic information such as age and interests during, for example an initialization process, the present invention compiles information for advertising and marketing

use. Using this information, the present invention allows event sponsors to create custom offerings to users. Similarly, the invention allows a sponsor to leverage user and market
5 information to create programs that address evolving user needs for targeting and acquiring new customers.

It is another optional feature and advantage of the present invention to provide marketing
10 opportunities for the events themselves and/or event related merchandise at an entertainment site. This allows users to shop for tickets, concessions, and event-related merchandise at a single time and location.

15 It is yet another optional feature and advantage of the present invention to apply these concepts to a wide variety of venues such as movies, concerts, sporting events, cultural activities, reserved seating events, events
20 requiring advanced ticket purchase, and/or other similar and analogous events or settings where goods and/or services can be sold, including upgraded, awarded and/or reprovisioned.

To accomplish the above and other
25 features, in one embodiment of the present

invention, a user first visits a leading portal,
for example, Yahoo!, and selects an event and a
desired time. Next, the user is linked to a
server, where he or she purchases a ticket and/or
5 concessions and other merchandise with, for
example, a credit card, in a secure transaction.
The event ticket is then transferred to the user's
account, which in turn is associated with a smart
card and/or wireless device in the possession of
10 the user. With the smart card/wireless device in
hand, the user avoids any box office lines and
proceeds directly to an attendant or a point of
sale (POS) server or system. The user then
presents the smart card to the attendant or POS
15 who reads the smart card using a reading device.
After reading the smart card, the attendant or POS
accesses the user's account and verifies that a
ticket has indeed been purchased before admitting
the user. Once the user is at the event, as
20 described below, the user has the functionality to
be upgraded, reallocated and/or rewarded tickets.

For example, in one embodiment of the
invention, the process begins as all tickets are
checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the
25 reserved seating area, such as a stadium or
theater, through, for example, bar code readers,

scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. For example, patrons can optionally check in a
5 predetermined time before the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone, or other manner. The important point is to provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to check in, and if
10 the patron fails to check in using a predetermined procedure to allow that seat to be provided to another willing patron in accordance with a process to be described below.

15 The patron may check in either a predetermined time before or after the event begins. Currently, such a process is impossible and unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved seating events have in simply getting
20 the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the event. The present invention represents a revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues to the theater/stadium or
25 optionally other patrons with the desirable ticket.

The check in procedure continues for a predetermined period of time until a predetermined time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10 minutes after the event begins, after a predetermined event, such as the second act of a play, and the like. Once the predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-allocation process. To begin the seat re-allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or interested in different or better seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms may include a random process, a process where priority patrons are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a process where patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to either the theater or the individual patron whose seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, or other predetermined process.

If the patron that is identified by the re-allocation process is determined to be present

in the theater or event, for example, via mobile telephone, wireless device, and/or manual verification, an optional sub-process determines whether the patron's optional profile is also

5 satisfied with the available seating. If the optional subscriber profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation process searches for another possible patron. If the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, then the eligible patron is

10 notified via one or more means, such as announcement, manually, wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board, and/or other means. The patron is then notified and presented with the option of moving for free, use of award points,

15 additional money to the theater and/or patron to whose seat is being provided, or other predetermined criteria to obtain the seat. Optionally, a bidding process may be initiated that allows various patrons to bid against one

20 another. Any standard bidding process may optionally be used. The patron, of course has the option to decline, and if so, the process continues and returns to the re-allocation process to attempt to locate another possible patron.

25 If the patron accepts, payment of money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via the

5 wireless device, credit card, debit card, points,
and the like, and the patron may now move to the
other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally
be made available as an empty seat to the re-
allocation process. If a predetermined period of
time has not expired, then the re-allocation
process may be run again to optionally
continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may
optionally store the up-graded ticket on a
10 wireless device for proof of entrance to the
better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or
row and/or section, includes a separate reader
device to receive optionally the original ticket
that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a
15 new ticket that may optionally be received by the
patron via the wireless device and/or manually via
a worker in the theater or stadium.

In another aspect of the invention, a
registration form is first completed by the user
20 in an initialization process. Subsequently, the
user selects an event and pays for the ticket
with, for example, a credit card in a secure e-
commerce transaction. Then, in this embodiment, a
bar coded ticket or receipt is generated and
25 printed by the user. With the bar coded ticket or
receipt in hand, the user avoids the box office

lines and proceeds directly to an attendant or POS
who collects the ticket, verifies the purchase
optionally automatically via a bar code reader,
and admits the user to the movie screen. The user
5 is then eligible to participate in the
reallocation, upgrade and/or reward process
described herein.

In alternate embodiments, a scanner is
utilized by, for example, an attendant who, rather
10 than tearing the ticket stub in half, simply scans
the bar code with the scanner to verify that a
ticket purchase has indeed been made by the user.
Similar processes may be used for the purchase of
merchandise and concessions. Furthermore, to
15 eliminate fraud, once a ticket has been scanned
into the real time point of sale system, it cannot
be used again. Alternatively, the present
invention is implemented in a fully automated
setting without human intervention, except in the
20 event of a failure or when assistance is needed.

In other embodiments, the present
invention utilizes credit cards, smart cards, or
cards with memory media embedded therein, or other
portable devices, such as wireless phones,
25 wireless pagers, personal digital assistants, or

Internet-ready watches as an alternative or in addition to the printed tickets.

5 In one embodiment, the present invention relates to upgrading and/or reallocating for the purchasing and provisioning an item utilizing a server linked to a client via a data communication network. This embodiment includes receiving a communication at the server from the client. The communication includes an order for a purchase of
10 the item and an identifier associated with an identification device. This embodiment also includes updating an account associated with the identifier to reflect the purchase, accessing the account by utilizing the identifier at a point of sale server upon presentation of the
15 identification device to verify the purchase, and provisioning the item at the point of sale server after verification of the purchase.

20 In another embodiment, the present invention also relates to reallocating, upgrading and/or awarding for the purchasing and/or provisioning an item utilizing a server linked to a client via a data communication network. This embodiment includes receiving a communication at
25 the server from the client. The communication

includes an order for a purchase of the item.
This embodiment also includes transmitting an
identifier associated with an account from the
server to the client for storage on an
5 identification device, updating the account to
reflect the purchase, accessing the account at a
point of sale server upon presentation of the
identification device by utilizing the identifier
to verify the purchase, and provisioning the item
10 at the point of sale server after verification of
the purchase. The purchaser is then optionally
eligible for the reallocating, upgrading and/or
awarding process described herein.

15 In yet another embodiment, the present
invention relates to purchasing and provisioning
an item utilizing a server linked to a client via
a data communication network. This embodiment
includes transmitting a communication from the
20 client to the server. The communication includes
an order for a purchase of the item and causes an
account to be updated thereby reflecting the
purchase. The purchase and the account are
associated with an identifier stored on an
25 identification device. The account is accessible

upon presentation of the identification device for
verifying and provisioning the item. The purchaser
is then optionally eligible for the reallocating,
upgrading and/or awarding process described
5 herein.

In still yet another embodiment, the
present invention relates to purchasing and
provisioning an item utilizing a server linked to
10 a client via a data communication network. This
embodiment includes transmitting an order for a
purchase of the item from the client to the
server, associating an identifier with the
purchase order and with an identification device
15 in the possession of or to be transferred to a
user, updating an account associated with the
identifier to include the purchase, accessing the
account at a point of sale server upon
presentation of the identification device by
20 utilizing the identifier to verify the purchase,
and provisioning the item at the point of sale
server after verification of the purchase order.
The purchaser is then optionally eligible for the
reallocating, upgrading and/or awarding process
25 described herein.

In yet another embodiment, the present invention relates to purchasing and provisioning an item utilizing a server linked to a client via a data communication network. This embodiment
5 includes receiving a communication from a user including a purchase order request. In this embodiment, the user is associated with an identifier. This embodiment also includes updating an account associated with the identifier
10 to reflect the purchase order, and provisioning the purchase upon presentation of the identifier. The user is then optionally eligible for the reallocating, upgrading and/or awarding process described herein.

15

In one embodiment of the invention, a method at least one of reallocates, upgrades and awards admittance to events to an event customer via a data communication network. The data
20 communication network optionally comprises a server, workstations operably connectable to the server, one or more databases operably connectable to the server and the workstations where the workstations optionally include a web
25 browser interface facilitating communication with

the server, a point of sale server operably connectable to the server, a point of sale system operably connectable to the point of sale server, and wireless devices operably connectable to the server. The wireless devices include at least one of a smart card, a personal digital assistant, a mobile telephones, and a mobile data device, and the wireless device comprising at least one of transmitting and receiving means and transceiver means for receiving and transmitting signals.

According to one embodiment, the method includes the sequential, non-sequential and sequence independent steps of receiving a communication from the event customer, the communication including a request to obtain admittance to at least one event, the communication also including an identifier associated with an identification device, updating an account associated with the identifier to reflect the request, accessing the account by utilizing the identifier stored on the identification device at the point of sale system upon presentation of the identification device to verify the request, admitting the event customer

at the point of sale system after verification of
the request, determining a predetermined time
period associated with the event indicative of
another event customer from event customers not
5 attending the event in accordance with first
predetermined criteria, releasing an allocation
associated with the another event customer and
notifying at least one of the event customers
that are at least one of currently attending the
10 event and registered for the at least one of
reallocating, reprovisioning, upgrading and
awarding responsive to the releasing the
allocation, and accepting by at least one of the
event customers the at least one of reallocating,
15 reprovisioning, upgrading and awarding in
accordance with second predetermined criteria.

The communication optionally includes at
least one of payment information, an event
20 selection, a venue selection, a concession
selection, and a merchandise selection.

The identification device optionally
comprises a memory medium for storing the
25 identifier. The accessing optionally further
comprises reading the identifier from the

identification device with a reading device.

The account is optionally stored in at least one of the server, the identification device, and the point of sale server. The account optionally
5 includes a list of purchased items. The request optionally comprises at least one of a movie ticket, a sporting event ticket, a concession, or merchandise.

10 In other embodiments of the present invention, demographic information is received from the event customer. In addition, the identification device optionally comprises at least one of a smart card, a credit card, a
15 ticket, a wireless phone, a personal digital assistant, and a wireless device.

The method optionally includes the step of generating at least one of a physical receipt, a
20 confirmation, and an electronic confirmation with at least one of the identification device and the point of sale server.

5 The method optionally includes the step of generating at least one of a physical receipt, a confirmation, and an electronic confirmation with at least one of the identification device and the point of sale server, and the at least one of the physical receipt, the confirmation, and the electronic confirmation comprises at least one of reserved seating and purchase information.

10 The second predetermined criteria optionally includes the event customer willing to pay at least one of a predetermined price and the highest price, and wherein the method further comprises the step of billing the event customer
15 in at least one of real-time or at a later time for the at least one of reallocating, reprovisioning, upgrading and awarding in accordance with the second predetermined criteria.

20 The method optionally includes the step of releasing an allocation associated with the another event customer and the notifying at least one of the event customers that are at least one
25 of currently attending the event and registered

for the at least one of reallocating,
reprovisioning, upgrading and awarding is
performed in accordance with a predetermined
algorithm.

5

The first predetermined criteria
optionally includes at least one of agreement
with one or more of the event customers, the
event customer not providing notice of non-
10 attendance a first predetermined time period
prior to the event, the event customer not
providing notice of non-attendance a second
predetermined time period after start of the
event, the event customer leaving the event
15 early, and other predetermined criteria.

In another embodiment of the invention, a
method is provided of upgrading and awarding
admittance to events to an event customer via a
20 data communication network. The data
communication network optionally comprises a
server, workstations operably connectable to the
server, one or more databases operably
connectable to the server and the workstations,

the workstations optionally including a web
browser interface facilitating communication with
the server, a point of sale system, and wireless
devices operably connectable to the server, the
5 wireless devices including at least one of a
smart card, a personal digital assistant, a
mobile telephone, and a mobile data device, and
the wireless device comprising at least one of
transmitting and receiving means and transceiver
10 means for receiving and transmitting signals to
and from the server.

The method includes the sequential,
sequence independent and non-sequential steps of
15 receiving a communication from the event
customer, the communication including a request
to obtain admittance to at least one event, the
communication also including an identifier
associated with an identification device,
20 processing the request including accessing an
account by utilizing the identifier stored on the
identification device at the point of sale system
upon presentation of the identification device to
verify and process the request, and updating a
25 database indicating that the request was

processed, admitting the event customer at the point of sale system after verification of the request, determining a predetermined time period associated with the event indicative of at least one other event customer not attending the event in accordance with first predetermined criteria, releasing an allocation associated with the at least one other event customer and notifying at least one of the event customers that are at least one of currently attending the event, previously submitted a request to attend the event and registered for the event to perform the at least one of upgrading and awarding responsive to the releasing the allocation, and accepting by the at least one of the event customers the at least one of upgrading and awarding in accordance with second predetermined criteria.

In another embodiment of the invention, a method is provided of upgrading and awarding admittance to events to an event customer via a data communication network. The data communication network optionally includes a server, workstations operably connectable to the server, one or more databases operably connectable to the server and the workstations,

the workstations optionally including a web
browser interface facilitating communication with
the server, a point of sale system, and wireless
devices operably connectable to the server, the
5 wireless devices including at least one of a
smart card, a personal digital assistant, a
mobile telephone, and a mobile data device, the
wireless device comprising at least one of
transmitting and receiving means and transceiver
10 means for receiving and transmitting signals to
and from the server.

The method includes the sequential, non-
sequential or sequence independent steps of
15 receiving a communication from the event
customer, the communication including a request
to obtain admittance to at least one event, the
communication also including an identifier
associated with the event customer, admitting the
20 event customer at the point of sale system after
verification of the request, and updating a
database indicating that the request was
processed, determining first predetermined
criteria associated with the event indicative of
25 at least one other event customer not attending

the event, releasing an allocation associated
with the at least one other event customer
responsive to the determining step, and notifying
at least another of the event customers to
5 perform the at least one of upgrading and
awarding responsive to the releasing the
allocation, and accepting by the at least another
of the event customers the at least one of
upgrading and awarding in accordance with second
10 predetermined criteria.

In another embodiment of the
invention, a system is provided to upgrade and
15 award admittance to events to an event customer.
The system includes a server comprising a
processor and a memory medium, the server
connected to a data communication network, the
memory medium containing instructions for
20 controlling the processor, wherein the processor
receives a communication from the event customer,
the communication including a request to obtain
admittance to at least one event, the
communication also including an identifier
25 associated with the event customer, updates a
database indicating that the request was

processed, determines first predetermined
criteria associated with the event indicative of
at least one other event customer not attending
the event, releases an allocation associated with
5 the at least one other event customer responsive
to the determining step, and notifies at least
another of the event customers to at least one of
upgrade and award the at least another of the
event customers with the allocation. The system
10 also includes a plurality of wireless devices
operably connectable to the server, the wireless
devices including at least one of a smart card, a
personal digital assistant, a mobile telephone,
and a mobile data device, the wireless device
15 comprising at least one of transmitting and
receiving means and transceiver means for
receiving and transmitting signals to and from
the server, including accepting by the at least
another of the event customers the at least one
20 of the upgrade and award for the reallocation via
at least one of the wireless devices.

In another embodiment of the invention, a
system is provided for upgrading and awarding
25 admittance to events to an event customer. The

system includes means for receiving a communication from the event customer, the communication including a request to obtain admittance to at least one event, the
5 communication also including an identifier associated with the event customer, means for admitting the event customer at the point of sale system after verification of the request, and updating a database indicating that the request
10 was processed, means for determining first predetermined criteria associated with the event indicative of at least one other event customer not attending the event, means for releasing an allocation associated with the at least one other
15 event customer responsive to the determining step, and notifying at least another of the event customers to perform the at least one of upgrading and awarding responsive to the releasing the allocation, and means for accepting
20 by the at least another of the event customers the at least one of upgrading and awarding in accordance with second predetermined criteria.

In another embodiment of the invention, a
25 method, system, server architecture and/or

tangible medium upgrade and award admittance of events to an event customer, preferably via a data communication network. The method includes the sequential, sequence independent and non-sequential steps of, for example, receiving a communication from the event customer including a request to obtain admittance to at least one event, admitting the event customer, determining first predetermined criteria associated with the event indicative of at least one other event customer not attending the event, releasing an allocation associated with the at least one other event customer, and notifying at least another of the event customers to perform the upgrade and/or reallocation.

In accordance with the invention, as indicated above, when the patron registers for ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for example the Internet, the patron may enter payment information at that time. Accordingly, when the patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, the system can automatically charge the patron without the patron actually submitting/typing, for example, credit card

information over a wireless device. The tickets of the present invention may be used to re-allocate patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium but were unable to get seats. Since the present invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very near to game time in accordance with one embodiment, the patron must be in the general vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this embodiment of the invention.

As described above, the patron may be transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual ticket or a confirmation number that they can use proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An optional graphical display via, for example, GPS, as discussed above may be used to guide the patron to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to help the patron decide whether to purchase the ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical map of the stadium and/or textual description may be provided to the patron to help the patron decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to accept.

5 In one alternative embodiment, if the patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated, the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that their seats have changed because they are late. In 10 this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the mistake.

15 In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this 20 situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats. The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the

ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet, public switched telephone network, cellular
5 network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with
10 the present invention.

In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-
15 allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be willing to give up their ticket if they have not arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative
20 embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated prior to the game because it increases the stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the ticket.

The present invention has particular benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold out, but where patrons habitually do not show up. For example, many stadiums are sold out by season ticket holders that do not show up to the game on a regular basis. The present invention permits these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and provide additional patrons a better experience. In addition, the present invention has the benefit of moving the patrons closer to the action/players, and therefore, the ability to support and/or motivate the players to play well. In additional alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide the original ticket holder a portion of the proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation, thereby providing additional incentive to the ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the

geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

5

In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems
10 attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this
15 alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field level would be upgraded first to those seats. Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated
20 to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be
25 combined with additional factors, for example,

relating to subscriber/patron value. As described above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

5 In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of
10 excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and the like. These ratings may then be taken into account in the re-allocation algorithm for future upgrades to the patron.

15 In alternative embodiments, the patrons eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard communication means. For example, standard text-
20 to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

5 In another embodiment of the invention, a method, system, server architecture and/or tangible medium upgrades or awards purchases for a customer. The method includes the sequential, sequence independent and non-sequential steps of, 10 for example, receiving a communication from the customer including a request to purchase an item, determining first predetermined criteria associated with the purchase associated with at least one other customer, and notifying at least 15 another of the event customers regarding the at least one of upgrade, award and purchase.

20 In another embodiment of the invention, a method, system, server architecture and/or tangible medium combines, upgrades and/or awards purchases for a customer. The method includes the sequential, sequence independent and non-sequential steps of, for example, receiving a 25 communication from the customer including a

request to purchase an item, determining first
predetermined criteria associated with the
purchase and associated with at least one other
customer, and notifying the at least one other
5 customer regarding the at least one of upgrade,
award and purchase.

In another embodiment of the invention, a
system is provided for purchasing, upgrading and
10 awarding an item to a customer. The system
includes means for receiving a communication from
the customer, the communication including a
request to obtain the item, the communication
also including an identifier associated with the
15 customer, means for associating the customer at
the point of sale system after verification of
the request, and updating a database indicating
that the request was processed, means for
determining first predetermined criteria
20 associated with the item indicative of at least
one other customer associated or interested in
the item, means for releasing an allocation
associated with the at least another customer,
and notifying at least another of the customers
25 to perform the at least one of purchasing,

5 upgrading and awarding for the item, and means
for accepting by the at least another of the
customers the at least one of purchasing,
upgrading and awarding in accordance with second
predetermined criteria.

10 Thus, any or all of the following
advantages may be provided by the present
invention: decrease costs incurred via printing
fewer tickets; decrease the number of employees at
the events as a result of increased home based
printing, wireless device and/or smart card usage;
increase efficiency at concession stands; provide
another method and outlet to sell tickets and
15 concessions; sell more tickets using e-mail
messages; improve sales of tickets and concessions
from key demographic information; receive a
portion of advertisement sales; improve safety due
to the decrease in the amount of cash handled at
the theatres; ensure that parents' money given to
20 children is actually spent on the concessions;
shorter lines; greater convenience at the
concession stand and point of sale; advance sales;
more information about events before purchase of
25 ticket; easy way to control a family budget;

greater access to merchandise; improve demographic information to improve sales; direct marketing; higher impact for advertising via e mail messages; and/or more focused advertising.

5

There has thus been outlined, rather broadly, the more important features of the invention in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood, and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are, of course, additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject matter of the claims appended hereto.

10

In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and to the arrangements of the components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced and carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein are for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting.

20

25

As such, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the conception, upon which this disclosure is based, may readily be utilized as a basis for the designing of other structures, methods and systems for carrying out the several purposes of the present invention. It is important, therefore, that the claims be regarded as including such equivalent constructions insofar as they do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Further, the purpose of the foregoing abstract is to enable the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the public generally, and especially the scientists, engineers and practitioners in the art who are not familiar with patent or legal terms or phraseology, to determine quickly from a cursory inspection the nature and essence of the technical disclosure of the application. The abstract is neither intended to define the invention of the application, which is measured by the claims, nor is it intended to be limiting as to the scope of the invention in any way.

These together with other objects of the invention, along with the various features of

novelty which characterize the invention, are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and forming a part of this disclosure. For a better understanding of the invention, its
5 operating advantages and the specific objects attained by its uses, reference should be made to the accompanying drawings and descriptive matter in which there is illustrated preferred embodiments of the invention.

10

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is directed to a prior art Internet capable browser dispenser architecture;

15

FIGs. 2-3 are illustrations of a prior art interactive game system;

FIG. 4 is an illustration of a prior art portable computing device for organizing a sports team;

20

FIG. 5 is a prior art illustration of a portable computerized pari-mutuel sports entertainment system;

FIG. 6 is an illustration of a prior art method and apparatus for a cryptographically assisted

commercial network system designed to facilitate
buyer-driven conditional purchase offers;

FIGs. 7-9 show a prior art radio frequency (RF)
transmission system;

5 FIG. 10 is an illustration of Yankee Group
projections for an installed base of PCs that will
reach 500 million by 2003;

FIG. 11 shows that mobile network carriers have
relied on a variety of incompatible wireless access
10 standards;

FIG. 12 shows the standard Bluetooth protocol
stack;

FIG. 13 illustrates the standard discovery and
registration process for Jini clients and services;

15 FIG. 14 shows the three fundamental components
in the Salutation architecture: *functional units*,
salutation managers, and *transport managers*;

FIG. 15 is an illustration of a control point
sending a multicast request to a network;

20 FIG. 16 is an illustration of a service location
protocol (SLP) which is an IETF protocol for
service discovery and advertisement;

FIG. 17 is an illustration of the Bluetooth stack differing from the classical seven-layer networking model;

5 FIG. 18 is an illustration viewing standard L2CAP as the data plane of the Bluetooth link layer;

FIG. 19 is an illustration of a Bluetooth transmitter that upconverts the baseband information to the frequency-modulated carrier;

10 FIG. 20 illustrates one embodiment of the logical architecture for the security services, where authentication verifies a claimant's identity;

15 FIG. 21 is an illustration showing once the ticket arrives at the Web browser, it must be secured from tampering;

FIG. 22 illustrates the logic for implementing the ticket-issuance service and its interaction with the authentication and user profile services;

20 FIG. 23 is a flowchart of an embodiment of the invention that incorporates one or more of the architectures or communications methods described above;

FIGs. 24-37 are flowcharts of various embodiment
sof the process of the present invention;

5 FIG. 38 is an illustration of a main central
processing unit for implementing the computer
processing in accordance with a computer
implemented embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 39 illustrates a block diagram of the
internal hardware of the computer of FIG. 38;

10 FIG. 40 is a block diagram of the internal
hardware of the computer of FIG. 38 in accordance
with a second embodiment;

15 FIG. 41 is an illustration of an exemplary
memory medium which can be used with disk drives
illustrated in FIGs. 38-40;

20 FIG. 42 is an illustration of the functional
operation of the main central processing unit
illustrated in FIGs. 38-41;

25 FIG. 43 is a block diagram of an alternative
computer system suitable for implementing the
invention;

FIG. 44 is a block diagram showing a portion
of the computer system of FIG. 43 in more detail;

FIG. 45 is an illustration of the architecture of the combined internet, POTS, and ADSL architecture for use in the present invention in accordance with a first embodiment;

FIG. 46 is an illustration of the architecture of the combined internet, POTS, and ADSL architecture for use in the present invention in accordance with a second embodiment;

FIG. 47 is an illustration of the architecture of the combined internet, POTS, and ADSL architecture for use in the present invention in accordance with a third embodiment; and

FIG. 48 is an illustration of the architecture of the combined internet, POTS, and ADSL architecture for use in the present invention in accordance with a fourth embodiment.

Description of Best Mode of the Invention

Reference now will be made in detail to the presently preferred embodiments of the invention.

Such embodiments are provided by way of explanation of the invention, which is not intended to be limited thereto. In fact, those of ordinary skill in the art may appreciate upon
5 reading the present specification and viewing the present drawings that various modifications and variations can be made. For example, features illustrated or described as part of one embodiment can be used on other embodiments to yield a still
10 further embodiment. Additionally, certain features may be interchanged with similar devices or features not mentioned yet which perform the same or similar functions. It is therefore intended that such modifications and variations
15 are included within the totality of the present invention.

Driven by a widespread understanding of the Internet's capabilities, the power of
20 electronic commerce, and advances in wireless technologies and devices, mobile commerce (m-commerce) is rapidly approaching the business forefront. According to independent research findings, m-commerce-the conduct of business and
25 services over portable, wireless devices-will soon

be a dominant force in business and society. For example:

- 5 • IDC, an information technology research firm, reports that 70 percent of all wireless subscribers worldwide will access data applications via their phones by 2002.

- 10 • The investment firm Robinson Humphrey predicts that, in the US, 50 percent of Internet hits will originate from wireless devices by 2004.

- 15 • The Yankee Group, a telecommunications research firm, projects that by 2004 more than 40 percent of wireless users in the US will access Internet content directly from their mobile devices.

20 The viability of these projections depends on the power of the underlying technology drivers and the attractiveness of m-commerce applications. To compete in a marketplace dominated by wireless devices, businesses must devise effective m-commerce strategies. Building successful
25 strategies begins by recognizing the forces driving m-commerce's emergence.

5 The US Federal Communication Commission's
 auctioning of personal communication-service
 spectrum space in the mid-1990s triggered the
 current rush to wireless communication methods.
 Wireless communication now encompasses not only
 telephones but appliances, including personal
 digital assistants (PDAs).

10 Internet use has grown on the strength of
 PC networks. According to Yankee Group
 projections, the installed base of PCs will reach
 500 million by 2003, as FIG. 10 shows. This huge
 base is essential to continued growth in
15 electronic commerce and other communications
 applications. Moreover, because these systems
 will have greater power and storage capability, as
 well as the best ever price-performance ratios,
 more powerful and sophisticated applications will
20 likely emerge for desktop computing and the
 Internet.

 Although these expectations are
 impressive, PCs still have two limiting
25 characteristics. First, users must sit in front
 of them. Second, even portable-notebook PCs have

to load software, dial into and connect with a network service provider, and await completion of the handshaking process before they can launch an Internet application. This sequence is
5 understandable, but at best it seems a tolerable nuisance. Hence, the dominant applications are still those that are worth the trouble it takes for a user to follow this access sequence or, at least, to keep the computer and applications
10 running.

The aggregate PC installation is substantial, but even more mobile communication devices are in use. The Gartner Group and other
15 research firms project that by 2004, the installed base of mobile phones worldwide will exceed 1 billion more than twice the number of PCs. In addition, the number of other wireless mobile devices will also increase dramatically. Wireless
20 PDA use will more than triple in the next three years. Unlike PCs, these wireless devices require no boot sequence, so people can use them as soon as they turn them on-making them attractive for quick-hit applications.

25

Just as the transmission control protocol/Internet protocol and the general purpose browser were principal drivers of Internet growth, letting disparate devices interconnect and communicate, similar factors will simplify the interconnectivity and communication of heterogeneous wireless devices. As FIG. 11 shows, mobile network carriers have relied on a variety of incompatible wireless access standards. Recently, however, a common communications technology and uniform interface standard for presenting and delivering wireless services on mobile devices-wireless application protocol (WAP)-have emerged.

15

WAP specifications include a microbrowser; scripting similar to JavaScript; access functions; and layered communication specifications for sessions, transport, and security. These specifications enable interface-independent and interoperable applications. Most wireless handset and device manufacturers, as well as several service and infrastructure providers, have adopted the WAP standard.

25

Current access technologies, including TDMA (time division multiple access), CDMA (code division multiple access), and GSM (Global System for Mobile Communication), transmit at 9.6 to 19.2 Kbps. These speeds are dramatically slower than the dial-up rates of desktop PCs connecting to the Internet. Although m-commerce is possible at these bandwidth rates, the slow speeds are not conducive to creating widespread business or consumer participation.

3G (third-generation) wireless technology will also be available. In addition to having greater bandwidth rates, with speeds up to 2 Mbps, 3G will support multimedia transmission. Integrating voice, data, and one- or two-way video will let m-commerce run over any wireless device.

M-commerce applications fall into three main categories: transaction management, digital content delivery, and telemetry services. Users will increasingly initiate a wide range of business transactions from mobile devices. Online shopping sites tailored to mobile phones and PDAs including browsing, selection, purchase, payment, and delivery-have already emerged. These sites

include all the necessary shopping features, such as online catalogs, shopping carts, and back office functions. Online booksellers are among the firms that have already implemented wireless shopping transactions. Another class of m-commerce transactions involves using wireless devices to initiate and pay for purchases and services in real time. These kinds of transactions will likely increase as users gain the capability-and become comfortable enough-to manage them. The highest m-commerce transaction volume will probably occur in micro transactions. When individuals reach for their e-cash-equipped mobile phones or PDAs-rather than coins-to settle transactions such as subway fees, widespread use of digital cash will be a reality.

Digital content delivery uses the wireless channel's distribution characteristics. These m-commerce activities include information browsing-instant retrieval of status information
5 (weather, transit schedules, sports scores, ticket availability, and market prices)-and directory services. The CNN Wireless news subscription service and the UPS PDA-linked package tracking and locator service are representative of emerging
10 content delivery services.

Digital products easily transport to and from wireless devices. Hence, downloading entertainment products-for example, MP3 music-is
15 likely to become even more commonplace when 3G arrives. Transferring software, high resolution images, and full-motion advertising messages will also become common activities. The emergence of high-quality display screens and greater bandwidth
20 will undoubtedly trigger the development of innovative video applications. Individuals will use wireless devices to access, retrieve, store, and display high-resolution video content for entertainment, product demonstration, and distance
25 learning.

The transmission and receipt of status, sensing, and measurement information-telemetry services-form the basis for a wide range of new applications involving mobile devices. Innovations in this area let people use wireless phones and appliances to communicate with various devices from their homes, offices, or in the field. For instance, delivery drivers will "ping" intelligent dispensing machines or store computers to determine where their rolling inventory is needed most or which locations need immediate service. Similarly, users will transmit messages to activate remote recording devices or service systems.

15

Active m-commerce applications function only when someone directly initiates them by transmitting payment details, requesting information, receiving specific content, or retrieving status information. In contrast, passive applications occur without the user taking any action-for example, the automatic collection of toll charges with dedicated cash cards. Integrating digital cash into mobile devices would make these cash cards unnecessary. These wireless devices would facilitate and record payment of

20
25

5 toll, mass-transit, fast-food, and other transactions without the user authorizing or entering identification information for each individual transaction. Users could arrange to have their cash chips update automatically by directing the wireless device to contact their money source and download additional digital cash whenever necessary.

10 Popular in Europe, short messages text messages, up to 160 characters in length, that show up on the recipient's display as they arrive-are examples of passive content delivery. As digital convergence becomes more commonplace, all forms of mail will passively go to wireless
15 devices, including digitized voice mail, fax documents, and e-mail. Passive security, intrusion, and emergency telemetry services will refine the monitoring of facilities and individuals. Any unusual event or unacceptable
20 condition will trigger user notification, regardless of location. Airlines are testing technology that will let them alert passengers, especially frequent fliers, to seat upgrades, schedule changes, and so on, through wireless
25 devices. Some airlines already have prototype

telemetry systems that transmit this kind of information to passengers as soon as they enter the airport or pass near a kiosk-like device.

5 Passive m-commerce telemetry is the foundation of still another form of interactive marketing. Stores will be able to market their products and services by transmitting promotional coupons and messages to passers by: "Come in and
10 enjoy a complimentary cup of our new coffee blend," or "Get half off, if you make your purchase within the next 30 minutes." This type of marketing may give rise to a new challenge: managing m-junk messages without turning off your
15 wireless device.

 The technology to facilitate m-commerce is within reach, even as barriers to its development fall away. Applications and wireless devices
20 promise to evolve together, each driving the introduction of innovative and powerful features in the other. The opportunity and challenge is for business to develop strategies that capitalize on the strengths of mobile commerce, thereby
25 helping it to compete in an increasingly digital marketplace. The greatest challenge to

structuring such a strategy may be creating the
innovations that will meet the needs and
expectations of consumers and commercial
participants. Additional details regarding the
5 above may be found in James A. Senn, The Emergence
of M-Commerce, IEEE COMPUTER (December 2000),
incorporated herein by reference and all
references cited there incorporated herein by
reference.

10

In accordance with one embodiment of the
invention, the process begins as all tickets are
checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the
reserved seating area, such as a stadium or
15 theater, through, for example, bar code readers,
scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or
other method where the patron is checked in,
either at the gate, seat or other location. For
example, patrons can optionally check in a
20 predetermined time before the event through a
wireless device, Internet connection, manual or
voice recognition telephone, or other manner. The
important point is to provide a standard manner
for allowing patrons to check in, and if the
25 patron fails to check in using a predetermined

5 procedure, to allow that seat to be provided to
another willing patron in accordance with a
process to be described below. The patron may
check in either a predetermined time before or
after the event begins. Currently, such a process
is impossible and unthinkable in view of the
difficulty reserved seating events have in simply
getting the patrons seated prior to the beginning
of the event. The present invention represents a
10 revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment,
earn patron loyalty and optionally provide
additional revenues to the theater/stadium or
optionally other patrons with the desirable
ticket.

15

The check in procedure continues for a
predetermined period of time until a
predetermined time period has expired, for
example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10
minutes after the event begins, after a
20 predetermined event, such as the second act of a
play, and the like. Once the predetermined time
period or event has been completed, the check in
procedure may be considered completed to begin
the seat re-allocation process. To begin the
25

seat re-allocation process, a re-allocation
algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons
that are willing or interested in different or
better seats. Such re-allocation processes or
5 algorithms may include a random process, a
process where priority patrons are given priority
for re-assignment of seat, a process where
patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-
assignment to either the theater or the
10 individual patron whose seat is being provided to
another patron, frequent event patrons, season
ticket patrons, or other predetermined process.

If the patron that is identified by the re-
15 allocation process is determined to be present in
the theater, for example, via mobile telephone,
wireless device, and/or manual verification, an
optional sub-process determines whether the
patron's optional profile is also satisfied with
20 the available seating. If the optional subscriber
profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation
process searches for another possible patron. If
the optional profile sub-process is satisfied,
then the eligible patron is notified via one or
25 more means, such as announcement, manually,

wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board,
and/or other means. The patron is then notified
and presented with the option of moving for free,
use of award points, additional money to the
5 theater and/or patron to whose seat is being
provided, or other predetermined criteria to
obtain the seat. Optionally, a bidding process
may be initiated that allows various patrons to
bid against one another. Any standard bidding
10 process may optionally be used. The patron, of
course has the option to decline, and if so, the
process continues and returns to the re-allocation
process to attempt to locate another possible
patron.

15

If the patron accepts, payment of money or
other means may be effectuated on the spot via the
wireless device, credit card, debit card, points,
and the like, and the patron may now move to the
20 other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally
be made available as an empty seat to the re-
allocation process. If a predetermined period of
time has not expired, then the re-allocation
process may be run again to optionally
25 continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may

optionally store the up-graded ticket on a wireless device for proof of entrance to the better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a new ticket that may optionally be received by the patron via the wireless device and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium.

10

In accordance with one observation of the present invention, mobile device and computer users increasingly face the management of many computing devices. One reason is the expansion of computing environments in the home and office, as printers, scanners, digital cameras, and other peripherals are integrated into networked environments. Another reason is the proliferation of mobile devices such as laptop and palm-sized computers, cellular phones, and pagers. Because these devices trade functionality for suitable form factors and low power consumption, they are necessarily "peripheral-poor" and must therefore establish connections to neighboring devices for storage, faxing, high-speed network access, and

25

printing. It is easy to become frustrated when
dealing with the configuration and interaction of
such a multitude of devices. Service discovery
technologies were developed to reduce this
5 frustration and to simplify the use of mobile
devices in a network by allowing them to be
"discovered," configured, and used by other
devices with a minimum of manual effort. Although
most of these "service discovery suites" promise
10 similar functionality•namely, reduced
configuration hassles, improved device
cooperation, and automated discovery of required
services•they come at the problem from different
philosophical and technical approaches. Since
15 none of these technologies is a superset of the
others and none is mature enough to dominate the
market, interoperation among them will require
bridging mechanisms. Five competing technologies
are described that may be used in conjunction with
20 the present invention, however, other technologies
may also or alternatively be used.

Bluetooth is a low-power, short-range,
wireless radio system being developed by the
25 Bluetooth Special Interest Group, and industry
consortium whose member companies include

Ericsson, Nokia, and IBM. The radio has a range of 10 meters and provides up to seven 1-megabit-per-second links to other Bluetooth devices. Bluetooth operates in the 2.4-GHz industrial scientific and medical (ISM) band to maximize international acceptance and employs a frequency-hopping system to minimize interference. The low-level communications are detailed in the Bluetooth specification.

Bluetooth has a small form factor; complete systems can be as small as 2-cm square. The technology supports both isochronous and asynchronous services. A simple isochronous application might link a cellular phone and wireless headset, where the headset and base are both Bluetooth devices. More complicated applications include automatic discovery of wireless network connections and automatic synchronization of data between several Bluetooth devices.

FIG. 12 shows the Bluetooth protocol stack. At the bottom, the radio and baseband layers provide the short-range, frequency-hopping radio platform. The link manager protocol (LMP)

handles data link setup and provides authentication and encryption services. The logical link control and adaptation protocol (L2CAP) supports multiplexed connectionless and connection-oriented communication over the LMP layer. L2CAP is proprietary, but other network protocols, such as IP, can be built on top of it. L2CAP is also used by higher level protocols. For example, FIG. 12 shows links to the Hayes-compatible AT (Attention) protocol, which provides a standard interface for controlling remote cellular phones and modems; RFComm, which emulates an RS-232 serial interface; a simple object exchange protocol (OBEX), which enhances Bluetooth's interoperability with IrDA; and Bluetooth's service discovery protocol (SDP).

Groups of up to eight Bluetooth devices can form ad hoc networks called *piconets* to communicate, share services, and synchronize data. In each piconet, a master device coordinates the other Bluetooth devices (including setting the 1,600-hops-per-second frequency-hopping pattern). Individual devices can participate in more than

one piconet at a time and can be in one of several states:

- *Standby*•the device is conserving power and waiting to connect to another Bluetooth device.
- 5 • *Inquire*•the device is searching for nearby Bluetooth devices.
- *Page*•the device is connecting to another Bluetooth device.
- *Connected*•the device is connected to another
10 Bluetooth device.
- *Hold and park*•the device is participating in a piconet with varying degrees of power savings.

The Bluetooth SDP provides a simple API
15 for enumerating the devices in range and browsing available services. It also supports stop rules that limit the duration of searches or the number of devices returned. Client applications use the API to search for available services either by
20 service classes, which uniquely identify types of devices (such as printers or storage devices), or by matching attributes (such as a model number or supported protocol). Attributes that describe the services offered by a Bluetooth device are stored

as a service record and are maintained by the device's SDP server.

5 The distinction between service classes and descriptive attributes is not well defined, but service classes generally define broad device categories, such as Printer, ColorPrinter, and PostScriptPrinter, while attributes allow a finer level of description. Manufacturers must
10 eventually standardize these service classes for maximal interoperability between Bluetooth devices.

 Unlike higher level service discovery
15 technologies such as Jini, Bluetooth's SDP does not provide a mechanism for using discovered services•specific actions required to use a service must be provided by a higher level protocol. However, it does define a standard
20 attribute ProtocolDescriptorList, which enumerates appropriate protocols for communicating with a service.

 Bluetooth devices provide data security
25 through unique 48-bit identifiers, 128-bit authentication keys, and 8- to 128-bit encryption

keys. Strong authentication is possible because
no international restrictions prevent it, but
Bluetooth devices must negotiate encryption
strength to comply with laws restricting
5 encryption. Note that Bluetooth devices must be
paired to provide them with matching secret keys
that will support authentication. Once paired,
Bluetooth devices can authenticate each other and
protect sensitive data from snooping. Regardless
10 of encryption strength, Bluetooth's fast
frequency-hopping scheme makes snooping difficult.

Jini is a service discovery and
advertisement system that relies on mobile code
15 and leverages the platform independence of the
Java language. The current Jini implementation is
based on TCP and UDP, but implementations based on
other network protocols are certainly possible.
The major requirements are reliable, stream-
20 oriented communication and a multicast facility.
Jini's language-centric approach allows a flexible
definition of service; for example, a service can
be implemented entirely in software and, after
discovery, can be downloaded and executed entirely
25 on the client. Examples of such algorithmic
services might include an implementation of a

proprietary algorithm for shading a polygon or
formatting a document to meet an organizational
standard. On the other hand, Jini also requires
each device either to run a Java virtual machine
5 or to associate itself with a device that can
execute a JVM on its behalf. For example, a Jini
"device chassis" might Jini-enable a number of
"dumb" devices, making their services available to
Jini clients.

10

Jini entities consist of *services*, *look up
servers* that catalog available services, and
clients that require services. A service can also
be a client; for example, a telescope might
15 provide pictures to a PDA as a service and look
for printing services as a client. All service
advertisements and requests go through a lookup
server. FIG. 13 illustrates the discovery and
registration process for Jini clients and
20 services.

To register service availability or to
discover services, a service or client must first
locate one or more lookup servers by using a
25 *multicast request protocol*. This request protocol
terminates with the invocation of a *unicast*

discovery protocol, which clients and services use to communicate with a specific lookup server. The unicast protocol culminates in the transfer of an instance of the ServiceRegistrar class, a "remote control" for the lookup server. A lookup server can use the multi-cast announcement protocol to announce its presence on the network. When a lookup server invokes this protocol, clients and services that have registered interest in receiving announcements of new lookup services are notified.

These three protocols are encapsulated in a set of Jini classes. For example, to find lookup services, a client or service need only create an instance of LookupDiscovery.

Jini uses Java's remote method invocation (RMI) facility for all interactions between either a client or a service and the lookup server). Once a lookup server has been discovered and an instance of ServiceRegistrar is available, services can register their availability, and clients can search for needed services by involving ServiceRegistrar methods.

Jini associates a proxy, or remote control object, with each service instance. A service advertises its availability by registering its object in one or more lookup servers via the register() method. This method takes several arguments, including an instance of Serviceitem, which contains a universally unique identifier for the service, its attribute set, and its remote control object. This object may either implement the service entirely (in the case of an algorithmic service such as the implementation of a polygon-shading algorithm), or provide methods for accessing the service over the network. The lease duration parameter of register() specifies the service's intended lifetime. The service is responsible for renewing the lease within the time specified to maintain its listing. The lookup server is free to adjust the lease time, which is returned in a ServiceRegistration object.

20

When a service first contacts a lookup server, the server generates a unique identifier for it; the service uses this ID in all future registrations. The service identifier lets clients request a specific service explicitly and

25

recognize when services reported by different
lookup servers are identical.

5 To use a service, a device must first
secure an instance of the proxy object for it.
From a client point of view, the location of the
service proxied by this remote control object is
unimportant, because the object encapsulates the
location of the service and the protocol necessary
10 to operate it.

 Clients use the lookup() method in
ServiceRegistrar to discover services. This
method takes a single argument, an instance of
15 ServiceTemplate. The ServiceTemplate constructor
takes several arguments. The first is the service
identifier. If the service identifier is null,
then arrays of types (Java classes, typically
interfaces) and attributes (attribute objects) are
20 used to match services. A service matches if its
class matches of the classes in the types array
and if, for each of the attribute objects, and all
non-null members match one of the service's
registered attributes. The return value from
25 lookup() is an instance of ServiceMatches, which
contains an array of remote control objects for

the services that match. Finally, the notify()
method allows a client to request an asynchronous
notification when services matching a
ServiceTemplate instance become available. This
5 method uses Jini's distributed events mechanism,
which extends Java's infrastructure for eventing
across JVMs.

Jini depends on Java's security model,
10 which provides tools like digital certificates,
encryption and control over mobile code
activities such as opening and accepting socket
connections, reading and writing to specific
files, and using native methods. Systems
15 administrators can establish different policies
depending on where the Java code originated (for
example, the local file system or a remote
machine).

Salutation is an architecture for service discovery under development by the Salutation Consortium, which includes members from both industry and academia. The consortium's goal is to build a royalty-free architecture for service advertisement and discovery that is independent of a particular network transport.

FIG. 14 shows the three fundamental components in the Salutation architecture: *functional units*, *salutation managers*, and *transport managers*. From a client's point of view, a functional unit defines a service. Functional units already specified or under consideration by the Salutation Consortium include printing, faxing, and document storage. There is also work on a functional unit specification to allow discovery of Hewlett-Packard JetSend-enabled devices. The specifications define attributes that characterize a service (for example, in the case of a printer, double-sided capability, color, and so on).

The functional unit Doc Storage defines file attributes that can be used to find information in temporary or long-term storage.

For, example, a client can search for operating system-specific drivers or software necessary to interact with a newly discovered device. The client simply queries a Salutation manager for the
5 necessary Doc Storage functional unit, extracts the application or device driver and installs it, thus providing limited code mobility.

Salutation managers function as services
10 brokers; they help clients find needed services and let services register their availability. Services and register and unregister functional units with the local Salutation manager by using the API calls `slmRegisterCapabilities()` and
15 `slmUnregisterCapabilities()`, respectively. A client can use the `slmSearchCapability()` call to determine if Salutation managers have registered specific functional units. Under the current version of the architecture, applications can
20 query only the local Salutation manager. Future versions will allow remote Salutation managers to be specified. Once a functional unit is discovered, `slmQueryCapability()` can be used to verify that a functional unit has certain
25 capabilities. The API also includes calls for initialization/version checking, availability

checking, and communication between clients and services. (An API simulator is available at <http://www.salutation.org/simulate.htm>.)

5 Salutation managers fill a role similar to lookup servers in Jini, but they can also manage the connections between clients and services. A Salutation manager can operate in one of the three "personalities":

10

- In *native* personality, Salutation managers are used only for discovery. They establish a connection between a client and service but perform no further operations on the data stream.

15

- The *emulated* personality is similar to the native the connection, but in the case they transfer native data packets encapsulated in Salutation manager protocol format, providing a bridge when no common message protocol exists between client and service. The Salutation manager is ignorant of the semantic content of the data stream between client and service.

20

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- In *Salutation* personality, Salutation managers establish the connection between client and

service and they also mandate the specific format of the data transferred. The Salutation architecture defines the data formats.

5 A transport manager isolates the implementation of the Salutation manager from particular transport-layer protocols and thereby gives Salutation network transport independence. To support a new network transport requires a new
10 transport manager to be written, but does not require modifications to the Salutation manager. Like Jini (and UPnP), Salutation requires a network transport protocol that supports reliable, stream-oriented communication. Initial
15 implementations are based on IP and IrDA because of their widespread use.

 Transport managers also locate the Salutation managers on their respective network
20 segments via either multicast, static configuration, or reference to a centralized directory. Discovery of other Salutation managers allows a particular Salutation managers to determine which functional units have been
25 registered and to allow clients access to these remote services. Communication between Salutation

managers is based on remote procedure call (RPC).
This interaction between remote Salutation
managers contrasts with other registry-based
service discovery mechanisms (for example, Jini
5 and Service Location Protocol), where clients
would be responsible for locating remote
registries. The Salutation specification currently
does not address security issues.

10 A lightweight version of Salutation,
called Salutation-Lite, has been developed for
resource-limited devices. It is based primarily
on IrDA to leverage the large number of infrared-
capable devices. Salutation-Lite focuses
15 primarily on service discovery. It uses the
functional units OpEnvironment and Display to
describe the operating system, processor class,
amount of memory and display characteristics of
palm-sized devices. By noting the particular
20 characteristics of the device, servers can provide
appropriate drivers and software wirelessly.
Salutation-Lite implementations can be down-loaded
free from the Salutation website at
<http://www.salutation.org>.

25

UPnP is a proposed architecture for service advertisement and discovery supported by the UPnP Forum, headed by Microsoft. Unlike Jini, which depends on mobile code, UPnP aims to
5 standardize the protocols used by devices to communicate, using XML. The UPnP specifications is still in an preliminary stage; major issues like security have not yet been addressed.

10 UPnP's device model is hierarchical. In a compound device (for example, a VCR/TV combo), the root device is discoverable, and a client (called a *control point*) can address the individual subdevices (for example, a tuner) independently.
15 Virtual Web servers in the device act as entry points for interacting with and controlling it. Devices that don't speak UPnP directly are called *bridge devices*. They can be integrated into a UPnP network in a manner similar to the
20 integration in a Jini device chassis: A bridge maps between UPnP and device-native protocols.

The UPnP specification described device addressing, service advertisement and discovery,

device control, eventing, and presentation. The eventing facility allows clients to watch for significant changes in the state of a discovered service. It functions similarly to Jini's distributed event facility. Presentation allows a client to obtain a GUI for a discovered device's virtual Web servers. Several protocols support these functions:

- 10 ■ AutoIP, a simple protocol that allows devices to dynamically claim IP addresses in the absence of a DHCP server;
- Simple service discovery protocol (SSDP), the UPnP mechanism for service discovery and advertisement;
- 15 ■ Simple object access protocol (SOAP), a protocol for remote procedure calls based on XML and HTTP that is used for device control after discovery; and
- Generic Event Notification Architecture (GENA), a
- 20 UPnP subscription-based event notification service based on HTTP.

When devices are introduced into a network, they multicast "alive" messages to control points.

When they wish to cancel availability of their services, they send "byebye" messages. In SSDP, each service has three associated IDs—service type, service name, and location—which are multicast when services are advertised. Any of these IDs can also be used to search for services.

To search, a control point sends a UPD multicast request to the network, as shown in FIG. 15. Matching services send unicast responses to the client. These responses contain URLs, each pointing to a XML *description document* that describes a service. A description document contains several important items:

- A *presentation URL* allows entry to a device's root page, which provides a GUI for device control.
- A *control URL* is the entry point to the device's control server, which accepts device-specific commands to control the device.
- An *event subscription URL* can be used by clients to subscribe to the device's event service. The client provides an *event sink URL* in the subscription request. Significant state changes in the device result in a notification to the client's event sink URL.

- A *service control protocol definition* describes the protocol for interacting with the device.

The service control protocol (SCP) definition allows APIs to be converted to device-specific commands, shielding the application level from details of particular devices. After retrieving the description document, a UPnP component on the control point called the *rehydrator* is "plumbed" with a definition of the device's SCP. This component then sends device-specific commands via the device's control URL. SOAP is used for this interaction.

SSDP is similar to the Internet Engineering Task Force's service location protocol, but it lacks a query facility that can search for services by attributes. Further, SLP incorporates security measures and can interact with the IETF standards-track dynamic host configuration protocol (DHCP) and the lightweight directory protocol (LDAP). Finally, SSDP specifications currently limit discovery to a single subnet. Since UPnP does not use a registry, it is also likely to generate significantly more network traffic than SLP.

Service location protocol (SLP) is an IETF protocol for service discovery and advertisement as illustrated in FIG. 16. It is currently at the "proposed standard" stage along the IETF standards track. Unlike Jini, Salutation, and UPnP, which all aspire to some degree of transport-level independence, SLP is designed solely for IP-based networks. It provides a set of C and Java bindings that provide service discovery and advertisement functions to application software.

SLP comprises three entities: *service agents* (SAs), *user agents* (UAs), and *directory agents* (DAs). SAs advertise the location and attributes of available services, while UAs discover the location and attributes of services needed by client software. UAs can discover services by issuing a directory-like query to the network. DAs cache information about available services. Unlike Jini, SLP can operate without directory servers. The presence of one or more DAs can substantially improve performance, however, by reducing the number of multicast messages and the amount of network bandwidth used. In fact, if DHCP is used to configure SLP agents

with the location of DAs, then multicast is completely unnecessary. SLP also interoperates with LDAP, so services registered with an SLP DA can be automatically registered in an LDAP
5 directory. This eliminates the need to reconfigure clients that already discover services using LDAP.

SLP has several mechanisms for discovering DAs:

- 10 ■ In passive discovery, SAs and UAs listen for multicast announcements for DAs, which periodically repeat these advertisements.
- In active discovery, SAs and UAs multicast SLP requests or use DHCP to discover DAs. When a DA
15 is present, SAs and UAs use unicast communication to, respectively, register their services and find appropriate services.

In the absence of DAs, UAs multicast
20 requests for service and receive unicast responses directly from the SAs that control matching services. This tends to increase bandwidth consumption, but provides a simpler model,

appropriate for small networks (such as a home LAN).

5 SLP services are advertised through a service URL, which contains all information necessary to contact a service. Clients use the service URL to connect to the service. The protocol used between the client and server is outside the scope of the SLP specification. This
10 separation is similar to Bluetooth, where the SDP does not specifically address how devices will communicate.

15 Service templates define an attribute set for each service type (a printer, for example). The attributes include a specification of the attribute types and information about default and allowed values; they are used to differentiate
20 between services of the same type and to communicate configuration information to UAs.

 SLP does not define the protocols for communication between clients and services, and so

5 its security model concentrates on preventing the
malicious propagation of false information about
service locations. SAs can include digital
signatures when registering so DAs and UAs can
verify their identity. Digital signatures can
also be required when DAs advertise their
availability, allowing UAs and SAs to avoid rouge
DAs (that is, those without a proper signature).
As with Jini, setting up the security features of
10 SLP requires some configuration effort, but the
effort can be well worth it, particularly in open
environments.

15 For service discovery to become pervasive,
either a single service discovery technology must
dominate or the most commonly used technologies
must be made interoperable. Currently, bridging
seems to be the most promising prospect for
interoperability.

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Implementations of certain low-level
functions of service discovery (such as
discovering registries) are interchangeable. For
example, the Salutation Consortium uses SLP for

service discovery beyond the local subnet. This lets the Salutation manager search for SLP DAs, and then use SLP to register functional units and search for requested services.

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A Jini-SLP bridge has also been developed, which allows services lacking a JVM to participate in Jini system. The heart of the Jini-SLP bridge is a special SLP UA that registers the
10 availability of "Jini-capable" SLP SAs. To do this, Jini-capable SLP services advertise the availability of a Jini driver factory. The UA discovers all SAs with driver factories and registers them with one or more Jini registered
15 SAs, it downloads the driver factory from the lookup server and uses it to instantiate a Java object to drive the service. Note that the SLP SAs are not required to host a Java virtual machine—the Java code installed on the SAs is
20 static. Similar schemes are possible for the other technologies; for example, it should be possible to Jini-enable UPnP services in this way.

Each service discovery technology has advantages and disadvantages. Currently, interoperability efforts are perhaps the most important force in service discovery, since it is very unlikely that device manufacturers will embrace multiple service discovery technologies on low-cost devices. Additional details regarding the above may be found in Golden G. Richard III, Service Advertisement and Discover, IEEE Internet Computing (September-October 2000), incorporated herein by reference and all references cited there incorporated herein by reference. Additional detail is provided herewith regarding Bluetooth protocol. The Bluetooth specifications define a radio frequency (RF) wireless communication interface and the associated set of communication protocols and usage profiles.

The link speed, communication range, and transmit power level for Bluetooth were chosen to support low-cost, power-efficient, single-chip implementations of the current technology. In fact, Bluetooth is the first attempt at making a single-chip radio that can operate in the 2.4-GHz ISM (industrial, scientific, and medical) RF band.

While most early Bluetooth solutions are dual chip, vendors have recently announced single-chip versions as well. The Bluetooth specification consists of two parts: core and profiles.

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The core specification defines all layers of the Bluetooth protocol stack. As shown in FIG. 17, the Bluetooth stack differs from the classical seven-layer networking model in some ways. These differences are primarily to support ad hoc connectivity among participating nodes, while conserving power and accommodating devices that lack resources to support all layers of the classical networking stack.

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The radio is the lowest layer. Its interface specification defines the characteristics of the radio front end, frequency bands, channel arrangements, permissible transmit power levels, and receiver sensitivity level. The next layer is the baseband, which carries out Bluetooth's physical (PHY) and media access control (MAC) processing. This includes tasks such as device discovery, link formation, and

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synchronous and asynchronous communication with peers. Bluetooth peers must exchange several control messages for the purpose of configuring and managing the baseband connections. These
5 message definitions are part of the link manager protocol (LMP). The functional entity responsible for carrying out the processing associated with LMP is called the *link manager*.

10 Bluetooth is unique in offering the front-end RF processing integrated with the baseband module. On-chip integration lowers the cost of the network interface, and the small size makes it easy to embed Bluetooth chips in devices such as cell
15 phones and PDAs. A Bluetooth chip can be connected to its host processor using USB, UART, or PC-card interfaces.

20 The Host Controller Interface (HCI) specification defines a standard interface-independent method of communicating with the Bluetooth chip. The software stack on the host processor communicates with the Bluetooth hardware using HCI commands. Since no hardware-specific

5 knowledge is needed, the Bluetooth stack software can easily be ported from one Bluetooth chip to another. The HCI layer is part of the Bluetooth stack, but it does not constitute a peer-to-peer communication layer since the HCI command and response messages do not flow over the air link.

10 The logical link control and adaptation protocol (L2CAP) specification can be viewed as Bluetooth's link layer. Usually, L2CAP and layers above it are implemented in software. L2CAP delivers packets received from higher layers to the other end of the link. Bluetooth devices can establish an L2CAP connection as soon as they are in range of each other. A client device then
15 needs to discover the services provided by the server device. The service discovery protocol (SDP) defines the means by which the client device can discover services as well as their attributes. The SDP design has been optimized for Bluetooth.
20 It defines only the discovery mechanisms; the methods for accessing those services are outside its scope.

5 The RFCOMM specification defines a method of
emulating the RS-232 cable connection on top of
the Bluetooth airlink. RFCOMM supports legacy
applications that use the COM port to communicate
with the peer host. For example, point-to-point
(PPP) protocols expect a serial line interface
from the lower layer. Since PPP provides a
packet-oriented interface to the higher layers,
all packet-based network and transport protocols,
10 including TCP/IP, can be supported on top of PPP.
More efficient methods of running IP over
Bluetooth are currently under development.

15 Vendors can use the services offered by the
Bluetooth stack to create a variety of
applications. Because interoperability is crucial
to Bluetooth's operation, the Bluetooth SIG has
defined profile specifications to support it. The
profiles specify controller and stack parameter
20 settings as well as the features and procedures
required for interworking among Bluetooth devices.
All vendor implementations of these profiles are
expected to be interoperable. The Bluetooth
certification authority uses the profiles to test
25 and certify compliance, and grants use of the

Bluetooth logo only to products that conform to the methods and procedures defined in the profiles.

5 The 2.4-GHz ISM band in which Bluetooth operates is globally available for license-free use. Europe and the United States allocate 83.5 MHz to this band, but Spain, France, and Japan allocate less. To accommodate these differences,
10 79 channels spaced 1 MHz apart are defined for Europe and the U.S., and 23 RF channels spaced 1 MHz apart are defined for Spain, France, and Japan. Efforts are under way to open up the full width of the spectrum in Spain and France, as well
15 as in Japan so that Bluetooth devices would function worldwide.

20 Bluetooth is a frequency-hopping spread-spectrum system. This means that the radio hops through the full spectrum of 79 or 23 RF channels using a pseudorandom hopping sequence. The hopping rate of 1,600 hops per second provides good immunity against other sources of interference in the 2.4-GHz band. The link speed
25 is 1 Mbps, which is easily achieved using a simple

modulation technique (Gaussian Frequency Shift Keying, or GFSK). A more complex modulation technique could achieve a higher rate, but GFSK keeps the radio design simple and low cost.

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The radio front end is usually the most costly part of a wireless network interface. In typical radio receivers, the RF filters, oscillators, and image-reject mixers process input signals at high frequencies. Such circuits require expensive materials. To keep costs down, Bluetooth recommends shifting the input signal to a lower intermediate frequency (IF, around 3 MHz), which allows on-chip construction of low-power filters using CMOS material. Shifting to low IF, however, creates new problems, such as reduced receiver sensitivity. Recommended receiver sensitivity for Bluetooth is -70 dBm or better. The comparable number for IEEE 802.11 Wireless LANs is about -90 dBm). Thus, for the same transmit power, the range for Bluetooth is shorter than it is for 802.11 WLAN.

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A set of Bluetooth devices sharing a common channel is called a *piconet*. A *piconet* is a star-shaped configuration in which the device at the center performs the role of *master* and all other devices operate as *slaves*. Up to seven slaves can be active and served simultaneously by the master. If the master needs to communicate with more than seven devices, it can do so by first instructing active slave devices to switch to low-power park mode and then inviting other parked slaves to become active in the *piconet*. This juggling act can be repeated, which allows a master to serve a large number of slaves.

Most envisioned Bluetooth applications involve local communication among small groups of devices. A *piconet* configuration consisting of two, three, or up to eight devices is ideally suited to meet the communication needs of such applications. When many groups of devices need to be active simultaneously, each group can form a separate *piconet*. The slave nodes in each *piconet* stay synchronized with the master clock and hop according to a channel-hopping sequence that is a function of the master's node address. Since

channel-hopping sequences are pseudorandom, the probability of collision among piconets is small. Piconets with overlapping coverage can coexist and operate independently. Nonetheless, when the
5 degree of overlap is high, the performance of each piconet starts to degrade.

In some usage scenarios, however, devices in different piconets may need to communicate with each other. Bluetooth defines a structure called
10 scatternet to facilitate interpiconet communication. A scatternet is formed by interconnecting multiple piconets. As shown on the right side of FIG. 17, the connections are
15 formed by *bridge* nodes, which are members of two or more piconets. A bridge node participates in each member piconet on a time-sharing basis. After staying in a piconet for some time, the bridge can turn to another piconet by switching to
20 its hopping sequence. By cycling through all member piconets, the bridge node can send and receive packets in each piconet and also forward packets from one piconet to another.

5 A bridge node can be a slave in both piconets or be a slave in one and a master in another. For example, consider a room full of people, where each person has a cell phone and a cordless headset. When users speak into their headsets, only the cell phones paired with their headsets should pick up the signal. In this example, each headset and cell phone pair constitutes a separate piconet. Now suppose these users also want to send text messages from their cell phones to one another. This will be possible only if all piconets are interconnected to form a large scatternet.

15 Bluetooth uses a procedure known as *inquiry* for discovering other devices; it uses paging to subsequently establish connections with them. Both inquiry and paging are asymmetric procedures. In other words, they involve the inquirer and the inquired (as well as the pager or the paged) devices to perform different actions. This implies that when two nodes set up a connection, each needs to start from a different initial state; otherwise, they would never discover each other. The profile specifications play an

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important role here, defining the required initial state for each device in all usage scenarios. A symmetric procedure for establishing connections is an ongoing topic of research.

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The inquiry and paging are conceptually simple operations, but the frequency-hopping nature of the physical layer makes the low-level details quite complex. Two nodes cannot exchange messages until they agree to a common channel-hopping sequence as well as the correct phase within the chosen sequence. Bluetooth solves this problem simply by mandating the use of a specific inquiry-hopping sequence known to all devices. During inquiry, both nodes (one is the listener and the other is the sender) hop using the same sequence; but the sender hops faster than the listener, transmitting a signal on each channel and listening between transmissions for an answer. When more than one listener is present, their replies may collide. To avoid the collision, listeners defer their replies until expiration of a random backoff timer. Eventually the sender device collects some basic information from the listeners, such as the device address and the

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clock offsets. This information is subsequently used to page the selected listener device.

5 The communication steps during the paging
procedure are similar, except that the paging
message is unicast to a selected listener, so the
listener need not back off before replying. The
sender also has a better estimate of the
listener's clock, which enables it to communicate
10 with the listener almost instantaneously. Upon
receiving an ACK for the paging message, the
sender becomes the master and the listener becomes
the slave of the newly formed piconet, and both
nodes switch to the piconet's channel-hopping
15 sequence. Later, if necessary, the master and
slave roles can be swapped.

 The steps for admitting a new slave into
an existing piconet are slightly more complex.
20 The master can either start discovering new nodes
in its neighborhood and invite them to join the
piconet or, instead, wait in scan (listen) state
and be discovered by other nodes. With both
options, communication in the original piconet

must be suspended for the duration of the inquiry and paging process. The latency of admitting a new node into the piconet can be large if the master does not switch to the inquiry or scan
5 modes frequently. This latency can be reduced only at the cost of some piconet capacity. The study of this trade-off is another topic of ongoing research.

10 Bluetooth offers different low-power modes for improving battery life. Piconets are formed on demand when communication among devices is ready to take place. At all other times, devices can be either turned off or programmed to wake up
15 periodically to send or receive inquiry messages. When a piconet is active, the slaves stay powered on to communicate with the master. It is possible to switch a slave into a low-power mode whereby it sleeps most of the time and wakes up only
20 periodically.

Three types of low-power modes have been defined:

- *Hold mode* is used when a device should be put to sleep for a specified length of time. As described earlier, the master can put all its slaves in the hold mode to suspend activity in the current piconet while it searches for new members and invites them to join.
 - *Sniff mode* is used to put a slave in a low-duty cycle mode, whereby it wakes up periodically to communicate with the master.
 - *Park mode* is similar to the sniff mode, but it is used to stay synchronized with the master without being an active member of the piconet. The park mode enables the master to admit more than seven slaves in its piconet.
- As soon as a piconet is formed, communication between the master and the slave nodes can begin. The piconet channel is divided into 625-microsecond intervals, called slots, where a different hop frequency is used for each slot. The channel is shared between the master and the slave nodes using a frequency-hop/time-division-duplex (FH/TDD) scheme whereby master-slave and slavemaster communications take turns. Slave-to-

5 slave communication is not supported at the
piconet layer. If two slaves need to communicate
peer to peer, they can either form a separate
piconet or use a higher layer protocol, such as IP
over PPP, to relay the messages via the master.
At a 1-Mbps link speed, a 625 microsecond slot
time is equivalent to the transmission time of 625
bits. However, a single slot packet size in
Bluetooth is only 366 bits. This reserves enough
10 guard time to let the frequency synthesizers hop
to the next channel frequency and stabilize.
Discounting space for the headers leaves 30 bytes
for the user payload.

15 To transmit real-time voice, an
application must reserve a slot in both directions
at regular intervals. In Bluetooth terminology,
this is called a synchronous (SCO) link. An SCO
link can transport telephone-grade voice. The
speech coder generates 10 bytes every 1.25
20 milliseconds. Since a baseband packet can carry
up to 30 bytes in each slot, only one slot in each
direction is needed every 3.75 ms (or every sixth
slot). The packet type that carries 30 voice
25 bytes is called an HV3 packet. This packet is

transmitted without coding or protection, and is not retransmitted if it is lost.

5 To cope with bit errors when the channel conditions are not perfect, some forward error correction (FEC) should be added to the voice payload. An HV2 packet carries 20 bytes of voice plus 10 bytes of redundant data (2/3 FEC code). Since 20 bytes of speech is generated in 2.5 ms, 10 the SCO link should reserve one slot in each direction every 2.5 ms (or every fourth slot). To cope with extreme channel conditions, the baseband specification also defines an HV1 packet that carries only 10 bytes of speech and 20 bytes of 15 FEC code. An HV 1 SCO link uses up the entire channel capacity. This means that all data transfer sessions will be suspended when an HV 1 SCO connection is in progress.

20 Data communication between a master-slave pair involves a different set of considerations. For example, the data payload must be protected by a cyclic redundancy check (CRC) so that the receiver can determine whether the received bits 25 are in error. When losses occur, the baseband

layer should retransmit the data. Furthermore, to make efficient use of the piconet channel, slots should be allocated on demand, instead of being reserved for the usage duration. A data path between a master-slave pair meeting all of these requirements is called an asynchronous data link (ACL). SCO links have priority over data, so ACLs can claim only unused slots. Only a single ACL can exist between a master and a slave.

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The master is responsible for distributing available slots among all ACLs. This scheme has two advantages:

- 15 • the master can ensure that the slave transmissions do not collide; and
- the slots can be allocated to satisfy the quality of service (QoS) requirement of each ACL. The master can grant more bandwidth to a slave by polling it more frequently or by changing the
20 packet size.

The baseband specification does not mandate the use of any specific slot-allocation scheme. Chip vendors can choose any policy that fits their target applications. As with SCO packets, the
5 payload size of singleslot ACL packets is limited to 30 bytes. After discounting space for the higher layer headers and the CRC, only 27 bytes are left to transport application data. When FEC is added, the available space goes down to 17
10 bytes. To improve channel efficiency, the baseband specification has defined multislot packets, which are three or five slots long and transmitted in consecutive slots. The transmitter stays fixed on a hop frequency during the length
15 of packet transmission and skips over the missed hops after the transmission is complete. This reduces the effective channel-hopping rate, but increases the channel efficiency because of fewer hops. Although link speed is 1 Mbps, achievable
20 aggregate throughput can range from 217.6 Kbps to 780.8 Kbps. The presence of an HV3 or HV2 SCO link significantly reduces the achievable throughput of an ACL.

L2CAP can be viewed as the data plane of the Bluetooth link layer (see FIG. 18). Because the baseband packet size is too small for transporting higher layer packets, a thin layer is needed for exporting a bigger packet size to the higher layers. While a number of generic segmentation and reassembly protocols could be used or adapted for use over ACLs, the Bluetooth SIG instead defined L2CAP, which is highly optimized to work in conjunction with the baseband layer. For example, L2CAP does not support integrity checks because the baseband packets are already CRC protected. Likewise, it is assumed that the lower layer delivers packets both reliably and in sequence. These two assumptions significantly simplify the design of segmentation and reassembly logic. The only caveat is that L2CAP will not work if used over any media other than the Bluetooth baseband.

The multiplexing and demultiplexing of higher layer protocols is supported using channels, multiple instances of which can be created between any two L2CAP endpoints. Each higher layer protocol or data stream is carried in

a different channel. The L2CAP channels are connection oriented in the sense that they require an explicit phase to establish the channel, during which both ends choose a local name (channel identifier) and communicate it to the other end. Subsequently, each packet sent over the channel is tagged with the channel identifier, which-within the context of the receiver-uniquely identifies the source as well as the protocol being transported over the channel. The L2CAP specification also defines a connectionless channel for supporting broadcast and multicast group communication, but this feature is not yet fully developed.

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Both ends of a Bluetooth link must support compatible sets of protocols and applications to successfully exchange data. In some cases it may also be necessary to configure protocol and stack parameter settings before applications can be started. Such configuration settings cannot be chosen statically, since some parameters may require adjustment to match the features and services supported by the peer Bluetooth device.

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Bluetooth's SDP provides a standard means for a Bluetooth device to query and discover services supported by a peer Bluetooth device. SDP is a client-server protocol. The server maintains a
5 list junction with the baseband layer. For example, of service records, which describe the characteristics of services hosted at the server. By issuing SDP queries, a client can browse all available service records maintained at the server
10 or retrieve specific attribute values from a service record.

In addition to defining query and response protocol formats, the SDP specification also
15 defines a standard method for describing service attributes. Service attributes are represented using an <identifier, value> pair. The 1.1 Bluetooth specification defines some of the commonly used services, but developers have the
20 freedom to define new subclasses of the standard services or to create new services on their own.

Since new service definitions do not require any coordination with the Bluetooth SIG numbering

5 authority, it is necessary to ensure that two independently created service definitions do not conflict. Collisions are avoided by associating each service definition with a universally unique identifier (QUID) which is generated once at the time a service is defined. UUIDs of the services defined by the Bluetooth SIG are included in the assigned numbers document.

10 If the client already knows the QUID of the service it is looking for, it can query the SDP server for specific service attributes. Alternatively, the client can browse the list of available services and select from the list. These are the only two search options supported in
15 SDP. Although other IP-based service discovery protocols, such as SLP and Jini, provide richer service description schema and more powerful search capabilities, the Bluetooth SDP has two
20 advantages:

- The majority of version-1.1-compliant Bluetooth devices will be non-IP devices. Requiring them to support IP only for the sake of supporting SLP would be costly.

- SDP is optimized to run over L2CAP. Its limited search capabilities and non-text-based attribute-id and attribute-value descriptions lend an efficient and small footprint implementation for small devices.

SDP provides a mechanism only for retrieving service information from other devices. Methods of invoking those services are outside the scope of SDP. Before a device can establish the L2CAP channel, the link manager must carry out a number of baseband-specific actions, such as piconet creation, master-slave role assignments, and link configuration. These functions belong to the control plane of the Bluetooth link layer and require the link manager to exchange LMP messages over the air link. Depending on the operating environment, the link manager must adjust a number of piconet and link-specific parameters. For example, the peer-link controller can be instructed to switch to a low-power mode, adjust its power level, increase the packet size, and change the requested QoS on an ACL.

Security can also be configured using LMP messages. Before a data or voice exchange can

5 begin, Bluetooth devices should be able to
authenticate each other. Likewise, transmission
over the air link must be encrypted to provide
protection from eavesdroppers. Both objectives
are easy to achieve when a security association
already exists between a pair of devices. The
link manager can use the shared secret key to
verify the peer device's authenticity as well as
to negotiate a link key for encryption. A typical
10 session between two Bluetooth devices begins with
the formation of a piconet, followed by the
exchange of LMP messages first to authenticate and
then to negotiate new encryption keys with the
peer device. Only upon successful completion of
15 the LMP handshake can further data exchange or
voice communication take place.

20 The level of security built into the version
1.1 specifications is satisfactory so long as the
initial security associations are computed in a
secure fashion. The baseband and LMP
specifications also define a method, called
pairing, for creating a new security association
between two devices when they pair for the first
time. The method uses an out-of-band channel for
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creating a security association, which is then
used as a seed to compute a cryptographically
secure shared secret key. By out-of-band channel
a user typing a randomly chosen PIN number on both
5 devices is meant. The security of a pairing phase
is limited by a user's ability to choose good PIN
numbers. In scenarios when one device in the pair
does not have a keypad, security can be further
compromised if the chosen PIN is transmitted to
10 the other device in clear text.

The ultimate objective of the Bluetooth
specifications is to allow multivendor
applications to interoperate. Different
15 applications may run on different devices, and
each device may use a protocol stack from one
vendor and a Bluetooth chip from another. Yet
interoperability among applications is achieved
when different implementations comply with the
20 same core and profiles specifications. At the
lowest layer, Bluetooth chips from different
vendors interoperate over the air link because all
Bluetooth chips implement the baseband and LMP
specifications. Bluetooth stacks, which can be
25 implemented as either firmware or software,

include the L2CAP, SDP, and RFCOMM layers. It is relatively easy to port a Bluetooth stack from one platform to another because the lowest layer of a Bluetooth stack interfaces with a Bluetooth chip via a standard HCI interface which is also a part of the 1.1 specifications.

Porting a Bluetooth application from one stack to another, however, is more difficult. The application can use any standard API to access L2CAP, PPP OBEX, or RFCOMM layers of the Bluetooth stack, but there is no standard API to access the control functions provided by the Bluetooth stack. For example, if an application were to initiate a Bluetooth inquiry to discover other devices in its neighborhood, it must use an API specific to the stack vendor to access those functions. Additional details regarding the above may be found in Ron Schneidman, Bluetooth's Slow Dawn, IEEE Spectrum (November 2000), incorporated herein by reference and all references cited there incorporated herein by reference.

FIG. 19 is an illustration of a Bluetooth transmitter that upconverts the baseband information to the frequency-modulated carrier. Frequency hopping and bursting are performed at this level. Conversely, the Bluetooth receiver downconverts and demodulates the RF signal as illustrated in FIG. 19. The Bluetooth channels are each 1 MHz wide. Frequency hopping occurs over 79 channels.

Although originally thought of simply as a replacement for the unseemly nest of wires that connects PCs to keyboards and printers, Bluetooth quickly evolved into a system that will allow people to detect and communicate with each other through a variety of mainly portable devices without their users' intervention. Bluetooth-enabled devices will be able to "talk" to each other as they come into range, which is about 10 meters, although this figure can be extended to more than 100 meters by increasing the transmit power from a nominal 1 mW to as much as 100 mW.

With Bluetooth technology, you can send e-mail from the computer on your lap to the cellular phone in your briefcase. Your Bluetooth-linked cell phone or similarly equipped PDA can

automatically synchronize with your desktop PC
whenever you pass it within Bluetooth range. Or,
you can have hands-free communications between a
Bluetooth-enabled headset and a cell phone, or you
5 can download images from a digital camera to a PC
or cell phone.

Critical mass is critical to Bluetooth's
success. Bluetooth technology is expected to make
10 its debut in cell phones and PDAs, but then will
move quickly into notebook and laptop computers,
printers, scanners, digital cameras, household
appliances, security/remote access, games, toys,
and more. Ericsson, which started it all with the
15 development of the Bluetooth concept, has already
announced several Bluetooth products, including a
headset, a PC Card for laptops and PDAs, and two
Bluetooth cell phones. A Bluetooth keyboard and
mouse are on the drawing board.

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Nokia and Fujifilm are working on a mobile
imaging technology they believe would enable Nokia
to add a Bluetooth chip to its clamshell-shaped
9110 Communicator so that it could receive images
25 taken on a Bluetooth-equipped Fujifilm digital
camera. After the addition of a few lines of

text, the received photographs can be sent to another Nokia Communicator, or to the Fujifilm Web service, where it can be viewed, printed, or burned into a CD-ROM. Finnish telecom operator Sonera has even demonstrated a Bluetooth-enabled vending machine-consumers buy products out of the machine by simply signaling an account code from a Bluetooth cell phone or PDA. The code would debit the user's account based on the code. Eventually, cell phones and PDAs are expected to be able to display personal bar codes, which can be read by a vending machine scanner.

The Gartner Group calls it the Supranet-the wireless connection of data and transactions between the hard-wire Internet, wireless devices such as cell phones and PDAs, and the "papernet," meaning the physical world of business cards and legal documents. Emerging seamless connections will deliver a whole host of new technologies, according to Gartner, with one of the first integral technologies to be tied to the Supranet being Bluetooth. By 2004, according to Gartner, 70 percent of new cell phones and 40 percent of the new PDAs will use wireless technology for direct access to Web content and

enterprise networks. Gartner believes that Bluetooth is set to become a defining force in portable electronic products.

5 In what the Bluetooth community calls "unconscious" or "hidden" computing, Bluetooth-enabled products will automatically seek each other out and configure themselves into networks-most often, with just two nodes. Though small, such networks can be quite useful. They can forward e-mail received on a cellular phone in
10 a person's pocket to the notebook or laptop computer in his or her briefcase; they can download data from a digital camera to a PC or cell phone; or they can alert their owners as they pass a Bluetooth-enabled vending machine.
15 Bluetooth can serve as a means for connecting laptop computers or other devices to the public Internet in airport lounges and conference centers through permanent access points. It can also enable its user to exchange business cards with
20 everyone passed on the street through a Bluetooth-enabled Palm-but not unless it has been given permission to identify the user to anyone or anything, which, according to a Merrill Lynch report on Bluetooth, "opens up whole new blind
25 dating opportunities."

More than 2000 organizations have joined the Bluetooth Special Interest Group (SIG) and most of them are currently developing Bluetooth-enabled products under a specification developed by the group. The IEEE 802.15 Personal Area Network (PAN) Working Group, formed early last year, has made Bluetooth the foundation for a range of consumer network products, most of them portable. The PAN Working Group is currently developing a 1-Mb/s standard based on the work of the Bluetooth SIG, and hopes to define a "consumer-priced," 20-Mb/s or faster wireless personal area network that can be widely deployed for shortrange information transfer.

The principal issue with Bluetooth is interoperability. Few of these products have met the Special Interest Group's requirements for interoperability or been tested under actual use conditions. One reason is that the qualification program was launched before conformance-test systems had been validated and were available. Not surprisingly, Bluetooth components are coming out later than expected and manufacturing capacity is limited. Another obstacle: Bluetooth products

must be tested at a qualified test facility to ensure compliance with the Bluetooth specification. But no qualification test facilities are currently listed on the official Bluetooth Web site, as required by the Bluetooth consortium. True, some test equipment has been delivered with Bluetooth test features-Teradyne's MicroWAVE6000 instrumentation suite, for example. But no "official" or validated test hardware was available to manufacturers as of early October. Since interoperability is the be-all and end-all of Bluetooth, there is no point in coming out with a product until the spec is finalized or until some other means is in place for verifying that the item has a very good chance of working with other Bluetooth products when they become available.

Few of those involved are more frustrated than the Special Interest Group's Promoter Group. It was formed late last year by 3Com, Lucent Technologies, Microsoft, and Motorola, and joined by SIG's original founders-Ericsson, IBM, Intel, Nokia, and Toshiba. Its charter is to lead the Special Interest Group's development of Bluetooth technology and promote interoperability among

members' products. Investments of resources have been huge-Microsoft Corp., Redmond, Wash., for example, reportedly has at least 60 people working on Bluetooth issues at least some of the time. To
5 help speed Bluetooth products to market, the Interest Group has created what amounts to an interim qualification program with somewhat relaxed interoperability testing.

10 Tests of Bluetooth products and devices are now being done against designated protocol test products called Blue Units. These are based on development kits designed by the Cadence
Symbionics Group, Cambridge, UK (part of Cadence
15 Design Systems, San Jose, Calif.) and available through Symbionics and Sweden's Ericsson Microelectronics AB, AU System, and Sigma ComTec. The development kits comprise baseband and radio
boards, interfaces (universal serial bus ports,
20 phone jacks, and RS-232-C ports), host software, accessories, and documentation. They were created to enable first-time Bluetooth design engineers to accelerate the development of prototype products and devices.

25

5 But Blue Units do not carry the weight of full compliance with the Bluetooth spec; they are simply test beds to be used to establish confidence in key Bluetooth protocols. While they can test a number of key functions, their use is limited to partial testing of the baseband and link manager software. Blue Units cannot, for example, be used to test the logical link control and adaptation protocol, which adapts upper-layer protocols over the baseband; nor can it test the service discovery protocol, which Bluetooth units use to learn about the capabilities of other Bluetooth units.

15 The tests a product manufacturer has to pass to qualify a product for a Bluetooth trademark are divided into four areas:

- Radio frequency qualification testing.
- 20 • Protocol conformance testing.
- Profile conformance testing.
- Profile interoperability testing.

25 Protocols describe how Bluetooth-enabled devices perform such basic tasks as service discovery, telephony signaling, and link

management. Profiles specify which basic
protocols and procedures are required for specific
categories of Bluetooth devices and applications,
like cordless telephones, headsets and faxing.
5 Profiles are the primary means for achieving
interoperability among Bluetooth-enabled devices.

Currently available profiles cover
cordless telephony, intercoms, serial ports,
10 headsets, fax machines, local-area network access,
file transfer, and dial-up networking. One group,
chaired by Philips Semiconductor, Sunnyvale,
Calif., expects to complete a written
specification on three audio and three video
15 applications by mid-2001. More than simply
replacing cables for wireless speakers using
Bluetooth technology, the group aspires to create
applications that will make audio/video equipment
interoperable with assorted consumer electronic
20 products, as in moving data between a Bluetooth-
enabled cell phone and a PC, or remotely changing
channels and controlling the volume on television
sets. Bluetooth accessories, such as PC Cards and
USB dongles (security devices), are treated
25 differently: they may be submitted for complete

qualification testing only when they are installed
in a host product.

Other working groups within the Special
5 Interest Group are writing profiles for printing,
imaging, location positioning, human interface
devices, and personal area networks. Medical,
automotive, and some other Bluetooth applications
will require additional product certification.
10 Naturally, qualification requirements are expected
to evolve as test equipment and procedures become
available. In the meantime, designers must pass a
series of tests based on four test reference
categories established by the Bluetooth
15 consortium. The categories range from merely
informative, through self-testing, to full testing
by a certified test facility using a validated
reference test system. Since no validated test
systems are yet available, the Special Interest
20 Group is for the time being waiving the most
rigorous category for manufacturers who pass the
less strict of the categories and who successfully
test their products against a Blue Unit.

25 Even that may not do the trick, though.
The Category A [most rigorous] test gives a

certain level of confidence that you will be interoperable with other Bluetooth devices," said Cedric Paillard, product marketing manager of Conexant Systems Inc. "It doesn't guarantee that you will be interoperable in the real world."

5 Conexant acquired Ontario-based Philsar Semiconductor earlier this year to help speed its entry into the Bluetooth chip market. At some point, when the necessary tools are in place,

10 Bluetooth products will show that they are interoperable with what is called a "Golden Unit" -a SIG-designated unit that has passed all the required qualification and conformance tests.

15 Because Bluetooth is still in its early development stages, test methodologies differ from those typical of more highly developed technologies. A Bluetooth application note suggests that Bluetooth test procedures may

20 require manual intervention or custom software control, as opposed to mature technologies in which easy-to-use, one-button measurements are available. Part of the problem is that it has taken a long time for test houses to develop

25 equipment with Bluetooth features, so that many Bluetooth designers have been forced to create

their own test sequences and methods based on
Bluetooth specifications.

5 A Bluetooth Design-Guide is essentially an
application layer that may be added to Agilent's
Advanced Design System. It contains system test
benches and reference designs, such as an optimal
low-intermediate frequency (IF) receiver, for part
of the RF portion of the Bluetooth physical layer.
10 The Tektronix CMU200 universal radio
communications tester is a multi-standard test set
for mobile phones with Bluetooth test features.
Teradyne has shipped its MicroWAVE6000
instrumentation suite for testing Bluetooth radios
15 and ICs to Ericsson, Oki, and Cambridge Silicon
Radio, and has said it has several other customers
lined up.

 Qualification grants companies the
20 worldwide right to incorporate Bluetooth wireless
technology in their products, and to use the
Bluetooth trademark; but even the trademark does
not guarantee that a product complies fully with
Bluetooth specifications. Passing the
25 qualification program demonstrates a certain
measure of compliance and interoperability, but as

the Bluetooth SIG notes in its own literature-because products are not tested for every aspect of the Bluetooth specification, qualification does not guarantee compliance. In
5 the final analysis, each manufacturer is responsible for ensuring that its products will interoperate with products from other Bluetooth manufacturers.

10 In accordance with one embodiment of the invention, an access Control and Session Management in the HTTP Environment is provided where a role-based access-control model is stored as LDAP objects in a security architecture. As the
15 only ubiquitous public data network, the Internet offers business partners a communications channel that previously existed only in unique situations with private, special-purpose networks. Well-publicized security risks, however, have limited
20 the deployment of business-to-business extranets, which typically use the Internet's public data network infrastructure. These risks extend behind firewalls to intranets, where any user gaining entry to a facility is often implicitly
25 authenticated to access unprotected services by

simply plugging a portable computer into an unused network port.

5 Role-based access controls (RBACs) and Web
session management to protect against network
security breaches in the HTTP environment is
provided. The RBAC and session management
services augment network-level security, such as
firewalls, inherent in the deployment of any Web-
10 based system with untrusted interfaces. The RBACs
are implemented through the Internet Engineering
Task Force's Lightweight Directory Access Protocol
(for IETF documents relevant to LDAP and other
Internet protocols. Session management is
15 implemented through cryptographically secured,
cookie-based ticket mechanisms.

 Role-based access controls are not part of
the typical Web server software set. The HTTP
20 RFCs specify a "401:WWW-Authenticate" server
response-essentially a logon challenge-for
authentication and access control. The notion of a
security realm applies: a typical security realm
comprises a tree or subtree of URLs for a given
25 server. Because each realm must map to unique URL
prefixes, security realms are mutually exclusive.

When a Web client requests a URL from a server,
the server checks the URL against its list of
realms for a prefix match. For each realm, there
is a corresponding access control list (ACL) that
5 specifies-either explicitly or through a set of
rules-which users are allowed access to URLs in
the realm, and which users are denied.

Secure realms are useful for gross access
10 control to a Web site. But each realm requires
authentication for access, so the user task of
supplying a name and password quickly becomes
burdensome. The need to differentiate user roles
magnifies the problem: few businesses want to
15 maintain distinct and largely redundant Web sites
and content for each user role in their
authorization base. An additional, more subtle
problem arises with the need to dynamically
generate content and control the visible link set
20 (that is, those URLs that we know in advance a
user is authorized to access, as in a search
result). Given the issues of user complexity and
Web site maintainability, secure realms are not
feasible in the implementation of an RBAC security
25 model. the approach described in this article
shows how to address these issues by using network

authentication services-such as LDAP, Sun
Microsystems NIS, and Microsoft's NT domains-
together with an RBAC model stored as LDAP objects
and secured session ticket.

5

The problems of entity authentication,
resource-access authorization, and session
management are not unique to the HTTP environment.
In custom client-server systems. sessions are
10 explicitly maintained by persistent network
connections and state information shared between
client and server applications. the request-
response-disconnect nature of HTTP precludes any
shared, connection-oriented state between client
15 and Web server, inso-far as that state is based on
the protocol itself.

RFC 2109 describes a state management
mechanism more generally known as a session
20 ticket. RFCs 2068 and 2616 specify HTTP's basic
authentication mechanism, which is simply a user-
ID and password encoded in Base64 and included as
part of the HTTP request headers. From a security
viewpoint, Base64 is essentially cleartext.
25 Unless transport layer security (TLS, RFC 2246) or

secure sockets layer (SSL) encryption is used,
this is not a secure method for authentication.

5 RFC 2595 recently proposed starting a TLS
session to protect what would otherwise be
cleartext password authentication for three
Internet standard protocols. Following this
proposal, a server would augment its advertised
capability set to include a "start TLS"
10 capability. A client would issue this start
command, re-determine the server's capabilities,
and then perform the authentication steps of the
protocol with the transport layer encryption
protecting the exchange. The message digest
15 authentication proposed in RFC 2617 is a type of
challenge-response authentication protocol that
does not transmit any cleartext passwords.

20 Role-based access control provides a rich
model for managing information and its accessors.
Many other security models can be represented as
subsets or simplifications of an RBAC model. A
role-based access without hierarchical control is
implemented where session termination is system-

5 enforced instead of user-elected, and all users have a single role (both of these are constraints under $RBAC_2$). Furthermore, the notion of sessions is limited in the HTTP environment because of the single request-response nature of the protocol.

$RBAC_0$ includes:

- U , a set of users
- R , a set of roles
- P , a set of permissions
- 10 • PA , a many-to-many permission-to-role assignment relation
- UA , a many-to-many user-to-role assignment relation
- S , a function mapping a session to a set of roles,
15 possibly dynamically

This was the approach used to implement LDAP-based RBAC. The permissions are treated like uninterpreted symbols in the model definition.
20 The symbol interpretation service is implemented either as an application-level service-access

meditation function-which was the case with the
insurance company implementation-or as an HTTP
server-request intercepts filtering function-which
was the case in subsequent implementations. (It
5 may also be possible to implement RBAC, (role
hierarchies) using the object class hierarchy that
is part of the X.500 schema employed by LDAP
directory servers.)

FIG. 20 illustrates one embodiment of the
10 logical architecture for the security services.
Other approaches are also possible. Authentication
verifies a claimant's identity. The architecture
in FIG. 20 shows authentication services as a
configurable service element. In the fielded
15 implementation, an LDAP bind operation with a
simple password provided the back-end
authentication service with parameters obtained
from the user in an HTTP form submitted over TLS.
FIG. 20 shows several other common authentication
20 services that may already exist in an enterprise
and could also be used. For a generic HTTP client,
the authentication possibilities are limited to
what can be accomplished with HTTP Basic
Authentication or form submission. Form
25 submission by the HTTP client causes the HTTP
server to act as a proxy for the client in

executing one of the authentication protocols.
This implies that the client trusts the HTTP
server in this proxy authentication role.

5 Session management services are shown in
FIG. 20, and detailed below.

Time service. The session management services
related to session duration and time-out require
agreement on the time. Some authentication
10 protocols also use time-varying sources, such as
challenge-response types. The required precision
of time measurement is usually on the order of a
few minutes for session idle time-out. The
network time protocol (RFC 1305) and simple
15 network time protocol (RFC 2030) provide close
synchronization of system clocks.

User profile service. This service provides user
attributes, particularly security roles and
distinguished names. Other information that may
20 be useful in the applications or content-tailoring
environment may be provided, such as given name,
common name, application preferences, and so on.

Ticket issuance service. This service grants a
session ticket to an authenticated user. The

session ticket stores information about the Web
site user in a tamper- and spoof-proof format and
utilizes session tune-out in the normally
stateless HTTP environment (for session ticket
5 specifications, see Bellovin²).

The session ticket based on HTTP cookies is
the only standards-based, scalable method for
maintaining state in the HTTP environment. The
10 ticket can be represented either as a single
cookie within which a number of values have been
catenated or as a collection of distinct cookies.
In our fielded implementation, a set of related
session tickets was used. For implementation
15 purposes, this collection is referred to as the
session ticket (in other words, it is a set of
related cookies).

The session ticket comprises a *payload*,
20 consisting of several distinct variables and their
values:

- User_IP: the client IP address to which the
session ticket was issued. This is used in
session ticket validation to detect source

spoofing . Note that firewalls should not be configured to hide or rental) the requestor address for this to he of use.

- 5 • User_ID: the username or distinguished name (DN) that was correctly authenticated to the site.
- Login_Expires: the session time-out and automatic logout function that Web browsers do not inherently support.
- 10 • Login_Expires_Absolute: the stated absolute expiration time of a session, even if it has not expired due to idleness time-out.
- Other attributes as required for the particular implementation.
- 15 • Ticket_MAC: a digital signature or message authentication code (MAC) computed against the catenation of the session ticket values.

20 The server issues the session ticket after a successful authentication protocol execution, which in most cases transpires over an encrypted SSL connection between the Web client and the Web server. Once the ticket arrives at the Web

browser, it must be secured from tampering, as shown in FIG. 21. A digital signature or Message Authentication Code (MAC) across the session ticket makes tampering detectable. If, for example, a user attempts to maliciously modify his role, the message represented by the session ticket will not be authentic.

The insurance company implementation used a hash-based MAC referred to as HMAC-SHA-1-160, as all 160 bits of the SHA-1 output are retained. Alternative implementations of the secured session ticket are possible using symmetric cookie encryption or public key methods for digital signature. This session ticket expiration time is determined by the earlier of the Login_Expires or Login_Expires_Absolute values in the secure session ticket. These values are determined at the time the session ticket is generated by adding the system configuration parameters of Session_Duration and Session_Duration_Absolute to the current time, obtained from the time service.

A valid session ticket is refreshed as it is used: this involves the update of the Login_Expires and Ticket_MAC values. The values are validated by a server and returned to the user in response to an HTTP request, which prevents ticket expiration while a user is active. Users would otherwise need to re-authenticate unnecessarily. FIG. 22 illustrates the logic for implementing the ticket-issuance service and its interaction with the authentication and user profile services.

Ticket validation service. After a ticket is issued, the HTTP server must validate it as presented in the request headers. Three checks are performed to validate a session ticket transmitted from a browser user to a server:

- The IP host address from which the session ticket was transmitted must match the User_IP value.
- The Ticket_MAC value (as a cookie header) in the request from the browser user must match the result of the same server-side calculation performed on the presented session ticket using the MAC key (excluding the Ticket_MAC value).

The time provided by the time service must be earlier than the times specified in the ticket's Login_Expires and Login_Expires_Absolute values.

5 If a session ticket is not valid, the user is asked to reauthenticate and thereby establish a valid session. When a user successfully authenticates, the session ticket transitions state to "Valid and Not Expired." From this
10 state, a number of possible transitions can be made:

- A ticket refresh may retain the "Valid and Not Expired" state. This is most common event.
- If the ticket is deleted (for example, the
15 representative cookie tile is deleted, or the browser application execution terminated and restarted), it arrives in a "No Ticket" state.
- If the ticket is tampered with or the machine IP address does not match the User_IP value, it
20 arrives in an "Invalid Ticket_MAC" state.
- If the ticket is presented after it has expired, it arrives in an "Expired" state.

- A tampered and expired ticket arrives in the "Invalid and Expired" state.

5 From any invalid state, a transition back to the same state based on a failed reauthentication is possible. If reauthentication is successful, the state transitions back to "Valid and Not Expired."

10 The User_IP may have been established by a dynamic host configuration protocol (DHCP) service (RFC 2131); this occurs if sessions time out or expire in a much shorter time than a DHCP address lease does. Session time-outs are usually in the
15 range of 5 to 20 minutes, while DHCP leases tend to have durations of 24 to 72 hours (a few environments with very short leases provide exceptions to this). If a DHCP lease is lost and renewed with a different IP address while a
20 session is active, then the user will need to re-authenticate. (In other words, the user will have been logged off by the address change; this would be true for any socket-based services in use as well).

5 The use of proxy servers raises another
issue related to User_IP. In the case of many
users and a single shared proxy, all users appear
to have the same IP address-that of the proxy.
This limits the effectiveness of User_IP in
binding a session ticket to a particular host. In
the case of many users and an array of proxy
servers with different IP addresses, the User_IP
10 generally will not match the actual IP address of
the rotating proxies. In a case where you can
control the proxy systems, one solution is to
activate proxy generation of the Client IP HTTP
request header and use this value instead of the
15 host IP address.

20 The keyed message authentication code
stored as the Ticket_MAC value requires the
provision of some key management services. Key
management services required for this approach
are:

- secure distribution of the MAC key to all servers
requiring it, and

- MAC key renewal or regeneration.

5 MAC key updates cause all currently valid
session tickets to become invalid. This forces
users to reauthenticate, which can be irksome if
key updates are frequent. In practice, a nightly
key update schedule is often adequate for typical
business-oriented-as opposed to military or
10 diplomatic-security policies. In a network of
servers requiring MAC key knowledge and renewal,
more elaborate key distribution methods are needed
to protect the key during transmission.

15 The Authorization Service mediates user
access to resources; its primary clients are HTTP
servers and other network-based, LDAP-aware
applications. When a user requests resources, the
HTTP server asks the authorization service if the
20 user is authorized for them. The response is
either true or false, and the HTTP server or
application processes the request accordingly. In
this way, the HTTP server acts like an application

access firewall, where filtering rules are based on an RBAC model accessed over LDAP.

LDAP is defined in several IETF documents. RFC 1487 (July 1993) was the earliest definition of a lightweight access protocol for X.500 directories. RFC 1777, released in March 1995, is known as LDAPv2 and remains the current draft standard. RFCs 2251 through 2256 are proposed standards and collectively constitute what is known as LDAPv3.

The LDAP RFCs describe a network protocol for communication between directory user agents (DUAs) and directory server agents (DSAs), supported by an underlying set of data structures referred to as a directory. The directory data structures are in accordance with the CCITT X.500 standards⁵ and provide a simple, object-oriented organization. The objects are not complex and do not have any executable code attached to them; they often look like simple database rows with the exception that attributes or columns may be designated as required or allowed. Objects may be designated

distinct classes, the attributes of which may be inherited by any object therein.

5 Using a compliant LDAP DSA and domains
example. (a Netscape Directory Server in the
implementation described here), the RBAC₀ model
defined previously can be implemented by making
two schema extensions. First, the default user
object is subclassed to a new object class with at
10 least one additional required attribute:
securityRole. At this point, if the client has
outer attribution requirements, those attributes
are also definers for the new default user object.

15 Second, the object class securityRoleObject
is defined. There is one instance of
securityRoleObject for each defined role in the
system. This collection of objects defines the
relation PA, as described for RBAC₀ (a many-to-
20 many permission-to-role assignment relation). In
practice, PA may be represented as a Boolean
matrix of dimensions corresponding to the number
of roles (rows) and permissions (columns) in the

system. Each securityRoleObject then corresponds to a row of the permission matrix.

5 Next, users are created in the LDAP directory using the new object class. This object class inherits all the usual attributes-e-mail address, fax number, street address, first name, last name, and so on-plus any additional new attributes the client requires. A typical distinguished name
10 (DN) for a user would have the form uid=userId, o=organization, c=countryName.

 After all of the information access functions are identified, user roles are defined. An
15 instance of the object class securityRoleObject with an identifier that included the role name and true or false values for each attribute that matched an information-access function was created in the insurance company implementation.

20

 Because HTTP cookies contain a return domain that may include a wild-card type of specification, it is possible to use this session

ticket scheme for a single Web sign-off (SWSO) capability. SWSO allows a user to authenticate once to the ticket-issuing service and obtain a session ticket that establishes the user's session and authentication throughout an entire DNS subdomain of hosts. An HTTP cookie contains a name, a value, a path, a domain, an expiration, and a *secure-only* attribute. By designating the domain to be, for example, *.computer.org, the cookie will be returned to any server in the subdomain of computer.org, such as www.computer.org, dlib.computer.org, ftp.computer.org, and so on. A single session ticket thereby provides the user's authentication and session management across a number of hosts related by domain name.

The example outlined below describes how a user sees the interaction with Web-based systems employing this approach to security. The initial login form includes possibilities for authentication service selection and domains for SWSO; in practice, this login form would be simpler.

The following steps describe this hypothetical session, illustrating the user's view of the system's security aspects:

- 5 • The user launches a Web browser and enters a URL, such as `http://dlib.computer.org`.
- 10 • Any cookies representing session tickets from previous sessions have expired, so no cookies are presented in the request headers. (Expired cookies may be present in the request, but the user does not see this.)
- 15 • The Web server examines the request headers looking; for a name-value pair. which serves as the session ticket. If the session ticket is invalid or expired. or if none is found. the user is redirected to an authentication HTML form, delivered over a secured SSL HTTP connection from the ticket-issuing server. This form may be delivered by the same Web server or by a different Web server dedicated to this purpose.
- 20 • The user fills in the authentication form, entering a user-ID and password, domain selections, and authentication method selection. and submits the form to the ticket-issuing server.

- The ticketing server operates as a proxy for execution of file selected authentication protocol with an authentication server.
- The ticketing server prepares a ticket for the user's session. The user ID, DN, session expiration time, absolute expiration, and possibly a client IP address form the ticket payload. A keyed MAC value is computed against the payload and appended to it; the payload and its MAC are then delivered in the HTTP response headers as cookies. The return domain of tile cookies corresponds to the domain selections made earlier on the form (*.computer.org in this case). The user is now authenticated and has an active Welt session with all Weft servers in the *.computer.org domain.
- The user is presented with the initial navigation screen of the Computer Society's Digital Library.
- Subsequent requests against any server in the *.dlib.computer.org domain will have tile session ticket cookie values in the HTTP request headers. All Web servers will extract that header and validate it using the shared MAC key. The user

does not need to re-authenticate until the session expires.

- 5 • The session expires after some time, say 30 minutes. A valid MAC but expired ticket results in a re-authentication as described above. Now re-authenticated, the user continues using the Digital Library.
- 10 • Finally, the user is done with the session, and instead of telling it time out, she logs out explicitly. The logout establishes a session ticket with the expiration time so that any re-use of the computer's currently running browser will require re-authentication.

15 A comprehensive approach to security must consider numerous potential attacks on network services. Relevant issues include security policy, information labeling, user administration, physical security, operation system confirmation and hardening, network topologies for service locations, firewall configuration and filtering rules, intrusion detection. penetration testing, and more. The following analysis of threats is restricted to those specific to the security

20

services identified in tile service architecture presented here.

5 Both SHA and MD5 produce a fixed number of hits from an arbitrary size input: SHA produces 160 bits and MD5 produces 128 hits. The MAC can be defeated only by a forgery. To succeed, an attacker must find a useful hash collision-a computationally daunting task. To guard against
10 this attack, the MAC key is regenerated daily, thus limiting the time available for calculating a useful hash collision to 24 hours. This interval may be reduced as computer power available to attackers increases.

15 The primary defenses against session ticket theft attacks arc the Login_Expires and User_IP elements. An attacker has only until the Login_Expires time to steal the session ticket and
20 move it to another machine: in practice, this window of opportunity is usually between 5 and 20 minutes. (If the attacker were in possession of the victim's password, this session ticket theft attack would he unnecessary.)

The attacker's machine must also engage in an IP address spoof so that it appears to have the same network IP address as the victim's machine.

5 Since both machines are active at the same time, this routing issue poses an additional problem for the attacker. A successful session ticket theft requires that an attacker read a user's disk-based cookie file, change the victim's IP address or

10 take the victim's machine off the network, assume the victim's IP address on a subnet such that the IP routing of the stolen address will operate correctly, and finally, access the Web-based resources while impersonating the victim. This is

15 a relatively complicated attack, which would generally require physical proximity to the victim's network and execution within a short timespan.

20 This attack is very unlikely to succeed when the cookies are *memory-resident*, that is, if they are never written to the cookie file by the browser software. This memory-only cookie treatment by browsers is not guaranteed, however.

25 If SSL is used only access to the ticket-issuance

service and the session tickets are subsequently transmitted in cleartext over the network, the tickets are vulnerable to recovery by an eavesdropper. When the HTTP traffic is SSL-encrypted, successful eavesdropping to steal a session ticket is unlikely.

If an attacker tries a different approach, such as extending the Login_Expires attribute or changing the User_IP of the session ticket, this will be detected in a Ticket_MAC computation mismatch. (The attacker does not have access to the MAC key secret used in the signature-generation algorithm, as it is protected by a firewall and operating system security measures.) A Ticket_MAC mismatch causes the server to immediately request re-authentication with the correct user ID and password, and generates an auditable event. Similarly, if an authenticated user seeks to modify some signed attribute, this will also be detected by a Ticket_MAC mismatch.

The function that generates the session ticket is another point of attack. Direct

5 execution of this function would allow all
attacker to revive an expired session on a machine
that an authenticated user has left unattended.
This function is protected by operating system
methods, application server methods, and Web
server access controls. No unauthenticated or
direct execution or viewing of the session ticket
generator is permitted.

10 LDAP-based authentication and
authorization services are also vulnerable to
attack. This could involve repeated attempts to
guess a user-ID and password for an LDAP bind with
simple password operation. Discovery of a user's
15 password would allow an attacker to impersonate an
authorized user. An attacker might also discover
a system administration account, and thereby be
able to change security role definitions.
Further, a user may seek to modify his security
20 role attribute to gain greater access to
resources.

Additional details regarding the above may
be found in Kurt Gutzmann, Access Control and

Session Management in the HTTP Environment, IEEE
Internet Computer (January-February 2001),
incorporated herein by reference and all
references cited there incorporated herein by
5 reference.

FIG. 23 is a flowchart of a first
embodiment of the invention that incorporates one
or more of the architectures or communications
10 methods described above. In FIG. 23, the process
begins as all tickets are checked in, for
example, as the patrons enter the reserved
seating area, such as a stadium or theater,
through, for example, bar code readers, scanners,
15 infrared readers, and/or manually or other method
where the patron is checked in, either at the
gate, seat or other location. For example,
patrons can optionally check in a predetermined
time before the event through a wireless device,
20 Internet connection, manual or voice recognition
telephone, or other manner. The important point
is to provide a standard manner for allowing
patrons to check in, and if the patron fails to
check in using a predetermined procedure, to
25 allow that seat to be provided to another willing
patron in accordance with a process to be

described below. The patron may check in either
a predetermined time before or after the event
begins. Currently, such a process is impossible
and unthinkable in view of the difficulty
5 reserved seating events have in simply getting
the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the
event. The present invention represents a
revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment,
earn patron loyalty and optionally provide
10 additional revenues to the theater/stadium or
optionally other patrons with the desirable
ticket.

The check in procedure continues for a
15 predetermined period of time until a
predetermined time period has expired, for
example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10
minutes after the event begins, after a
predetermined event, such as the second act of a
20 play, and the like. Once the predetermined time
period or event has been completed, the check in
procedure may be considered completed to begin
the seat re-allocation process. To begin the
seat re-allocation process, a re-allocation
25 algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons
that are willing or interested in different or

5 better seats. Such re-allocation processes or
algorithms may include a random process, a
process where priority patrons are given priority
for re-assignment of seat, a process where
patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-
assignment to either the theater or the
individual patron whose seat is being provided to
another patron, frequent event patrons, season
ticket patrons, or other predetermined process.

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 If the patron that is identified by the
re-allocation process is determined to be present
in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone,
wireless device, and/or manual verification, an
15 optional sub-process determines whether the
patron's optional profile is also satisfied with
the available seating. If the optional subscriber
profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation
process searches for another possible patron. If
20 the optional profile sub-process is satisfied,
then the eligible patron is notified via one or
more means, such as announcement, manually,
wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board,
and/or other means. The patron is then notified
25 and presented with the option of moving for free,

5 use of award points, additional money to the
theater and/or patron to whose seat is being
provided, or other predetermined criteria to
obtain the seat. Optionally, a bidding process
may be initiated that allows various patrons to
bid against one another. Any standard bidding
process may optionally be used. The patron, of
course has the option to decline, and if so, the
process continues and returns to the re-allocation
10 process to attempt to locate another possible
patron.

15 If the patron accepts, payment of money or
other means may be effectuated on the spot via the
wireless device, credit card, debit card, points,
and the like, and the patron may now move to the
other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally
be made available as an empty seat to the re-
allocation process. If a predetermined period of
20 time has not expired, then the re-allocation
process may be run again to optionally
continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may
optionally store the up-graded ticket on a
wireless device for proof of entrance to the
25 better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or

5 row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a new ticket that may optionally be received by the patron via the wireless device and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium. The worker in the stadium may input the confirmation number received from the patron to determine the appropriate upgrade. In this embodiment, only 10 confirmation numbers that are provided to the workers are input into the system, thereby reducing the amount of transactions in the system, as opposed to pushing, for example, an upgrade list to all workers in the stadium in accordance with another embodiment of the invention. 15

20 In accordance with the invention, as indicated above, when the patron registers for ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for example the Internet, the patron may enter payment information at that time. Accordingly, when the patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, the system can automatically charge the patron without the patron actually 25 submitting/typing, for example, credit card

information over a wireless device. The tickets of the present invention may be used to re-allocate patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium but were unable to get seats. Since the present invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very near to game time in accordance with one embodiment, the patron must be in the general vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this embodiment of the invention.

As described above, the patron may be transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual ticket or a confirmation number that they can use proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An optional graphical display via, for example, GPS, as discussed above may be used to guide the patron to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to help the patron decide whether to purchase the ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical map of the stadium and/or textual description may be provided to the patron to help the patron decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to accept.

In one alternative embodiment, if the patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated, the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that their seats have changed because they are late. In this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the mistake.

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats. The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the

ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet, public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be willing to give up their ticket if they have not arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated prior to the game because it increases the stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the ticket.

The present invention has particular benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold out, but where patrons habitually do not show up. For example, many stadiums are sold out by season ticket holders that do not show up to the game on a regular basis. The present invention permits these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and provide additional patrons a better experience. In addition, the present invention has the benefit of moving the patrons closer to the action/players, and therefore, the ability to support and/or motivate the players to play well. In additional alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide the original ticket holder a portion of the proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation, thereby providing additional incentive to the ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the

geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

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In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems
10 attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this
15 alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field level would be upgraded first to those seats. Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated
20 to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be
25 combined with additional factors, for example,

relating to subscriber/patron value. As described above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

5 In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and
10 the like. These ratings may then be taken into account in the re-allocation algorithm for future upgrades to the patron.

 In alternative embodiments, the patrons
15 eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard communication means. For example, standard text-to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may
20 be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

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FIG. 24 is a flowchart of a second embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 24, the process begins as all tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. For example, patrons can optionally check in a predetermined time before the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone, or other manner. The important point is to provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to check in, and if the patron fails to check in using a predetermined procedure, to allow that seat to be provided to another willing patron in accordance with a process to be described below. Currently, such a process is impossible and unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved

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seating events have in simply getting the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the event. The present invention represents a revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons with the desirable ticket.

The check in procedure continues for a predetermined period of time until a predetermined time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10 minutes after the event begins, after a predetermined event, such as the second act of a play, and the like. Once the predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-allocation process. To begin the seat re-allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or interested in different or better seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms may include a random process, a process where priority patrons are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a process where

patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-
assignment to either the theater or the
individual patron whose seat is being provided to
another patron, frequent event patrons, season
5 ticket patrons, or other predetermined process.

If the patron that is identified by the
re-allocation process is determined to be present
in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone,
10 wireless device, and/or manual verification, an
optional sub-process determines whether the
patron's optional profile is also satisfied with
the available seating. If the optional subscriber
profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation
15 process searches for another possible patron. If
the optional profile sub-process is satisfied,
then the eligible patron is notified via one or
more means, such as announcement, manually,
wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board,
20 and/or other means. The patron is then notified
and presented with the option of moving for free,
use of award points, additional money to the
theater and/or patron to whose seat is being
provided, or other predetermined criteria to
25 obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the

option to decline, and if so, the process continues and returns to the re-allocation process to attempt to locate another possible patron.

5 If the patron accepts, payment of money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via the wireless device, credit card, debit card, points, and the like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. In addition, the original ticket
10 holder is optionally reimbursed with award points, a percentage of the revenue, a flat fee, an additional event ticket that might also be upgradable, and/or any other means for rewarding the original ticket holder. The patron's seat may
15 then optionally be made available as an empty seat to the re-allocation process. If a predetermined period of time has not expired, then the re-allocation process may be run again to optionally continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may
20 optionally store the up-graded ticket on a wireless device for proof of entrance to the better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket
25 that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a

new ticket that may optionally be received by the patron via the wireless device and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium.

5 In accordance with the invention, as indicated above, when the patron registers for ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for example the Internet, the patron may enter payment information at that time. Accordingly, when the
10 patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, the system can automatically charge the patron without the patron actually submitting/typing, for example, credit card information over a wireless device. The tickets of
15 the present invention may be used to re-allocate patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium but were unable to get seats. Since the present invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very
20 near to game time in accordance with one embodiment, the patron must be in the general vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this embodiment of the invention.

As described above, the patron may be transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual ticket or a confirmation number that they can use proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An optional graphical display via, for example, GPS, as discussed above may be used to guide the patron to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to help the patron decide whether to purchase the ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical map of the stadium and/or textual description may be provided to the patron to help the patron decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to accept.

In one alternative embodiment, if the patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated, the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that their seats have changed because they are late. In this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the mistake.

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats.

The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

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In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet, public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

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5 In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be willing to give up their ticket if they have not arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative
10 embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated prior to the game because it increases the stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the ticket.

15 The present invention has particular benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold out, but where patrons habitually do not show up. For example, many stadiums are sold out by season ticket holders that do not show up to the game on
20 a regular basis. The present invention permits these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and provide additional patrons a better experience. In addition, the present invention has the benefit of
25 moving the patrons closer to the action/players,

and therefore, the ability to support and/or motivate the players to play well. In additional alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide the original ticket holder a portion of the proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation, 5 thereby providing additional incentive to the ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, 10 portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to 15 patrons that, for example, may be in the geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

20

In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems 25 attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations

by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this
5 alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field level would be upgraded first to those seats. Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated
10 to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be
15 combined with additional factors, for example, relating to subscriber/patron value. As described above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

20 In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and
25 the like. These ratings may then be taken into

account in the re-allocation algorithm for future upgrades to the patron.

5 In alternative embodiments, the patrons eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard communication means. For example, standard text-
10 to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

15 As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

20 FIG. 25 is a flowchart of a third embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 25, the process begins as all tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for

example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. For example, patrons can optionally check in a predetermined time before the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone, or other manner. The important point is to provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to check in, and if the patron fails to check in using a predetermined procedure, to allow that seat to be provided to another willing patron in accordance with a process to be described below. Currently, such a process is impossible and unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved seating events have in simply getting the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the event. The present invention represents a revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons with the desirable ticket.

The seat re-allocation process is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or

interested in different or better seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms may include a random process, a process where priority patrons are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a process where patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to either the theater or the individual patron whose seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, or other predetermined process. Simultaneously or subsequently, the check in procedure continues for a predetermined period of time until a predetermined time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10 minutes after the event begins, after a predetermined event, such as the second act of a play, and the like. Once the predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-allocation process.

If the patron that is identified by the re-allocation process is determined to be present in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone, wireless device, and/or manual verification, an

optional sub-process determines whether the patron's optional profile is also satisfied with the available seating. If the optional subscriber profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation process searches for another possible patron. If the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, then the eligible patron is notified via one or more means, such as announcement, manually, wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board, and/or other means. The patron is then notified and presented with the option of moving for free, use of award points, additional money to the theater and/or patron to whose seat is being provided, or other predetermined criteria to obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the option to decline, and if so, the process continues and returns to the re-allocation process to attempt to locate another possible patron.

20 If the patron accepts, payment of money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via the wireless device, credit card, debit card, points, and the like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally
25 be made available as an empty seat to the re-

allocation process. If a predetermined period of time has not expired, then the re-allocation process may be run again to optionally continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may optionally store the up-graded ticket on a wireless device for proof of entrance to the better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a new ticket that may optionally be received by the patron via the wireless device and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium.

In accordance with the invention, as indicated above, when the patron registers for ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for example the Internet, the patron may enter payment information at that time. Accordingly, when the patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, the system can automatically charge the patron without the patron actually submitting/typing, for example, credit card information over a wireless device. The tickets of the present invention may be used to re-allocate

patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or
patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium
but were unable to get seats. Since the present
invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very
5 near to game time in accordance with one
embodiment, the patron must be in the general
vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this
embodiment of the invention.

10 As described above, the patron may be
transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual
ticket or a confirmation number that they can use
proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An
optional graphical display via, for example, GPS,
15 as discussed above may be used to guide the patron
to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to
help the patron decide whether to purchase the
ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical
map of the stadium and/or textual description may
20 be provided to the patron to help the patron
decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to
accept.

In one alternative embodiment, if the
patron that has their ticket re-allocated in
25 error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to

the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated, the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that their seats have changed because they are late. In this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the mistake.

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In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

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In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a

map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats. The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

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In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet,

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public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the
5 event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

In another alternative embodiment, the
10 system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be
15 willing to give up their ticket if they have not arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated prior to the game because it increases the
20 stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the ticket.

The present invention has particular benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold

out, but where patrons habitually do not show up. For example, many stadiums are sold out by season ticket holders that do not show up to the game on a regular basis. The present invention permits
5 these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and provide additional patrons a better experience. In addition, the present invention has the benefit of moving the patrons closer to the action/players,
10 and therefore, the ability to support and/or motivate the players to play well. In additional alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide the original ticket holder a portion of the proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation,
15 thereby providing additional incentive to the ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-
20 allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the
25 geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing

to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

5 In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats
10 that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field
15 level would be upgraded first to those seats. Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front
20 row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be combined with additional factors, for example, relating to subscriber/patron value. As described
25 above, additional factors may be utilized in the

algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

5 In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and the like. These ratings may then be taken into account in the re-allocation algorithm for future
10 upgrades to the patron.

In alternative embodiments, the patrons eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless
15 device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard communication means. For example, standard text-to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept
20 the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be

incorporated into the embodiments described above,
and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

FIG. 26 is a flowchart of a fourth
5 embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 26, the
process begins as all tickets are checked in, for
example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating
area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for
example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared
10 readers, and/or manually or other method where the
patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or
other location. For example, patrons can
optionally check in a predetermined time before
the event through a wireless device, Internet
15 connection, manual or voice recognition telephone,
or other manner. The important point is to
provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to
check in, and if the patron fails to check in
using a predetermined procedure, to allow that
20 seat to be provided to another willing patron in
accordance with a process to be described below.
Currently, such a process is impossible and
unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved
seating events have in simply getting the patrons
25 seated prior to the beginning of the event. The

present invention represents a revolutionary
process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron
loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues
to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons
5 with the desirable ticket.

The check in procedure continues for a
predetermined period of time until a predetermined
time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes
10 before the event begins, 10 minutes after the
event begins, after a predetermined event, such as
the second act of a play, and the like. Once the
predetermined time period or event has been
completed, the check in procedure may be
15 considered completed to begin the seat re-
allocation process. To begin the seat re-
allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is
used to re-assign seats for patrons that are
willing or interested in different or better
20 seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms
may include a random process, a process where
priority patrons are given priority for re-
assignment of seat, a process where patrons are
willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to
25 either the theater or the individual patron whose

seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, or other predetermined process.

5 If the patron that is identified by the re-allocation process is determined to be present in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone, wireless device, and/or manual verification, an optional sub-process determines whether the patron's optional profile is also satisfied with the available seating. If the optional subscriber profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation process searches for another possible patron. If the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, then the eligible patron is notified via one or more means, such as announcement, manually, wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board, and/or other means. The patron is then notified and presented with the option of moving for free, use of award points, additional money to the theater and/or patron to whose seat is being provided, or other predetermined criteria to obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the option to decline, and if so, the process

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continues and returns to the re-allocation process to attempt to locate another possible patron.

5 If no confirmation is received from the patron for a predetermined period of time, the re-allocation process continues to wait until the predetermined period of time has expired. Once the predetermined period of time has expired and there is no response received from the patron
10 provided with the option of changing their seat, the patron is cleared or removed from the eligible list, and the seat is considered or assigned empty status for the re-allocation algorithm to be again implemented.

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 If the patron accepts and a confirmation is received, payment of money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via the wireless device, credit card, debit card, points, and the
20 like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally be made available as an empty seat to the re-allocation process. If a predetermined period of time has not expired, then the re-allocation

process may be run again to optionally
continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may
optionally store the up-graded ticket on a
wireless device for proof of entrance to the
5 better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or
row and/or section, includes a separate reader
device to receive optionally the original ticket
that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a
new ticket that may optionally be received by the
10 patron via the wireless device and/or manually via
a worker in the theater or stadium.

Of course, the re-allocation algorithm
does not have to be run or implemented one patron
15 at a time, but may be run to re-allocate or re-
assign a plurality of patrons. If one patron or
higher priority patron does not accept, then the
next already generated patron may be queried to
determine whether the next patron desires the seat
20 re-allocation. Further, the system optionally
downloads instructions on how to get to the new
location, and can provide step-by-step
instructions using an optional standard global
positioning system (GPS) incorporated in, or as a
25 separate accessory to, the wireless device.

5 In accordance with the invention, as indicated above, when the patron registers for ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for example the Internet, the patron may enter payment information at that time. Accordingly, when the patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, the system can automatically charge the patron without the patron actually submitting/typing, for example, credit card information over a wireless device. The tickets of the present invention may be used to re-allocate patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium but were unable to get seats. Since the present invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very near to game time in accordance with one embodiment, the patron must be in the general vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this embodiment of the invention.

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As described above, the patron may be transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual ticket or a confirmation number that they can use proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An

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optional graphical display via, for example, GPS,
as discussed above may be used to guide the patron
to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to
help the patron decide whether to purchase the
5 ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical
map of the stadium and/or textual description may
be provided to the patron to help the patron
decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to
accept.

10 In one alternative embodiment, if the
patron that has their ticket re-allocated in
error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to
the event based on the predetermined criteria but
the patron was still planning on attending because
15 they forgot about their seat being re-allocated,
the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon
the checking in of the patron and notify them that
their seats have changed because they are late. In
this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to
20 further upgrade the patrons because of the
mistake.

In accordance with one embodiment of the
present invention, the process of the present
25 invention specifically reserves seats of the

highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats. The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet, public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be

willing to give up their ticket if they have not arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated
5 prior to the game because it increases the stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the ticket.

The present invention has particular
10 benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold out, but where patrons habitually do not show up. For example, many stadiums are sold out by season ticket holders that do not show up to the game on a regular basis. The present invention permits
15 these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and provide additional patrons a better experience. In addition, the present invention has the benefit of moving the patrons closer to the action/players,
20 and therefore, the ability to support and/or motivate the players to play well. In additional alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide the original ticket holder a portion of the proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation,
25 thereby providing additional incentive to the

ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-
5 allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the
10 geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

15 In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations
20 by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the
25 next closest section for example on the field

level would be upgraded first to those seats.
Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for
example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated
to the seats that have now become available from
the patrons that have been upgraded to the front
5 row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme,
the present invention maximizes the re-allocation
numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be
combined with additional factors, for example,
10 relating to subscriber/patron value. As described
above, additional factors may be utilized in the
algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of
subscribers to offer the upgrade.

In alternative embodiments, patrons in the
15 vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons
may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for
example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of
excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and
the like. These ratings may then be taken into
20 account in the re-allocation algorithm for future
upgrades to the patron.

In alternative embodiments, the patrons
eligible for the upgrade may be notified using
25 standard email communications over a wireless

device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard communication means. For example, standard text-to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether
5 an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be
10 incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

FIG. 27 is a flowchart of a fifth embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 27, the process begins as all tickets are checked in, for
15 example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the
20 patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. For example, patrons can optionally check in a predetermined time before the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone,

or other manner. The important point is to provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to check in, and if the patron fails to check in using a predetermined procedure, to allow that seat to be provided to another willing patron in accordance with a process to be described below. Currently, such a process is impossible and unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved seating events have in simply getting the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the event. The present invention represents a revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons with the desirable ticket.

The check in procedure continues for a predetermined period of time until a predetermined time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10 minutes after the event begins, after a predetermined event, such as the second act of a play, and the like. Once the predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-

allocation process. To begin the seat re-allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or interested in different or better seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms may include a random process, a process where priority patrons are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a process where patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to either the theater or the individual patron whose seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, or other predetermined process.

15 If the patron that is identified by the re-allocation process is determined to be present in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone, wireless device, and/or manual verification, an optional sub-process determines whether the patron's optional profile is also satisfied with the available seating. If the optional subscriber profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation process searches for another possible patron. If the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, 25 then the eligible patron is notified via one or

more means, such as announcement, manually,
wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin
board, and/or other means. The patron is then
notified and presented with the option of moving
5 for free, use of award points, additional money to
the theater and/or patron to whose seat is being
provided, or other predetermined criteria to
obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the
option to decline, and if so, the process
10 continues and returns to the re-allocation process
to attempt to locate another possible patron.

If the patron accepts, payment of money or
other means may be effectuated on the spot via the
15 wireless device, credit card, debit card, points,
and the like, and the patron may now move to the
other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally
be made available as an empty seat to the re-
allocation process. The process then optionally
20 determines whether there have been additional
vacancies, for example, just prior to the event,
during the event or as a result of predetermined
processes, and empties and/or makes available
these additional seats for the event. For
25 example, if standard smart card, standard scanner,

standard bluetooth, wireless, or other technology is used in the present invention, additional seats may be made available as patrons leave the event early, for example if diverted for an urgent
5 business meeting, and the like. These additional seats may provide additional opportunities for patron satisfaction, revenue (theater or patrons), advertising, advertising sponsorship for banner advertising on the wireless device and/or in the
10 theater, and the like. Thus, scanners posted at strategic locations, for example, at the exit of the theater or stadium will confirm that the patron is leaving, and optionally prompt the patron to confirm that they do not plan on
15 returning. This embodiment may optionally be used in other embodiments of the present invention, and vice versa.

If a predetermined period of time has not
20 expired, then the re-allocation process may be run again to optionally continuously re-allocate seats while advantageously including the additional seats. The patron may optionally store the upgraded ticket on a wireless device for proof of
25 entrance to the better seating area. Optionally,

the seat and/or row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a new ticket that may optionally
5 be received by the patron via the wireless device and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium.

In accordance with the invention, as
10 indicated above, when the patron registers for ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for example the Internet, the patron may enter payment information at that time. Accordingly, when the patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or
15 purchase, the system can automatically charge the patron without the patron actually submitting/typing, for example, credit card information over a wireless device. The tickets of the present invention may be used to re-allocate
20 patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium but were unable to get seats. Since the present invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very near to game time in accordance with one
25 embodiment, the patron must be in the general

vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this embodiment of the invention.

5 As described above, the patron may be transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual ticket or a confirmation number that they can use proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An optional graphical display via, for example, GPS, as discussed above may be used to guide the patron to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to help the patron decide whether to purchase the ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical map of the stadium and/or textual description may be provided to the patron to help the patron decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to accept.

10

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 In one alternative embodiment, if the patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated, the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that their seats have changed because they are late. In

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this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the mistake.

5 In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-
10 allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

15

 In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the
20 potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present

invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats.

5 The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

10 In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated,
15 and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet,
20 public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or

other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be willing to give up their ticket if they have not arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated prior to the game because it increases the stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the ticket.

The present invention has particular benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold out, but where patrons habitually do not show up. For example, many stadiums are sold out by season ticket holders that do not show up to the game on a regular basis. The present invention permits these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance

with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and provide additional patrons a better experience. In addition, the present invention has the benefit of moving the patrons closer to the action/players, and therefore, the ability to support and/or motivate the players to play well. In additional alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide the original ticket holder a portion of the proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation, thereby providing additional incentive to the ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems
5 attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this
10 alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field level would be upgraded first to those seats. Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated
15 to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be
20 combined with additional factors, for example, relating to subscriber/patron value. As described above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

25 In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons

may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for
example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of
excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and
the like. These ratings may then be taken into
5 account in the re-allocation algorithm for future
upgrades to the patron.

In alternative embodiments, the patrons
eligible for the upgrade may be notified using
10 standard email communications over a wireless
device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard
communication means. For example, standard text-
to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may
be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether
15 an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept
the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of
the above alternative embodiments may be
20 incorporated into the embodiments described
above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed
below.

FIG. 28 is a flowchart of a sixth embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 28, the process begins by enrolling members in the program that are interested in the ticket upgrade. Tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. An optional separate check in area is provided for patrons that want to participate in the upgrade program. For example, patrons can optionally check in a predetermined time before the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone, or other manner. The important point is to provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to check in, and if the patron fails to check in using a predetermined procedure, to allow that seat to be provided to another willing patron in accordance with a process to be described below. The patron may check in either a predetermined time before or after the event begins. Currently, such a process is impossible and unthinkable in view of the difficulty

reserved seating events have in simply getting the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the event. The present invention represents a revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons with the desirable ticket.

10 The check in procedure continues for a predetermined period of time until a predetermined time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10 minutes after the event begins, after a predetermined event, such as
15 the second act of a play, and the like. Once the predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-allocation process. To begin the seat re-
20 allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or interested in different or better seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms may include a random process, a process where
25 priority patrons are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a process where patrons are

5 willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to either the theater or the individual patron whose seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, a standard bidding process, or other predetermined process.

10 An optional polling process to poll existing members and non-members in seats to whether additional seats are available. That is, in another optional embodiment of the present invention, non-members may also make their seats available for re-allocation/re-sale at any point in the process. In this additional polling process, the next step is to determine whether additional seats have been made available. If 15 additional seats have been made available, then these additional seats are added to the list of available seats.

20 If the patron that is identified by the re-allocation process is determined to be present in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone, wireless device, and/or manual verification, an optional sub-process determines whether the

patron's optional profile is also satisfied with the available seating. If the optional subscriber profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation process searches for another possible patron. If
5 the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, then the eligible patron is notified via one or more means, such as announcement, manually, wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board, and/or other means. The patron is then notified
10 and presented with the option of moving for free, use of award points, additional money to the theater and/or patron to whose seat is being provided, or other predetermined criteria to obtain the seat. Optionally, a bidding process
15 may be initiated that allows various patrons to bid against one another. Any standard bidding process may optionally be used. The patron, of course has the option to decline, and if so, the process continues and returns to the re-allocation
20 process to attempt to locate another possible patron.

If the patron accepts, payment of money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via
25 the wireless device, credit card, debit card,

points, and the like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally be made available as an empty seat to the re-allocation process. If a predetermined
5 period of time has not expired, then the re-allocation process may be run again to optionally continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may optionally store the up-graded ticket on a wireless device for proof of entrance to the
10 better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a new ticket that may optionally be received by the
15 patron via the wireless device and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium.

In accordance with the invention, as indicated above, when the patron registers for
20 ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for example the Internet, the patron may enter payment information at that time. Accordingly, when the patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, the system can automatically charge the
25 patron without the patron actually

submitting/typing, for example, credit card
information over a wireless device. The tickets of
the present invention may be used to re-allocate
patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or
patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium
5 but were unable to get seats. Since the present
invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very
near to game time in accordance with one
embodiment, the patron must be in the general
vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this
10 embodiment of the invention.

As described above, the patron may be
transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual
15 ticket or a confirmation number that they can use
proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An
optional graphical display via, for example, GPS,
as discussed above may be used to guide the patron
to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to
20 help the patron decide whether to purchase the
ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical
map of the stadium and/or textual description may
be provided to the patron to help the patron
decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to
25 accept.

5 In one alternative embodiment, if the patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated, the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that their seats have changed because they are late. In 10 this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the mistake.

15 In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this 20 situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

5 In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the
10 upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed
15 schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats. The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for
the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

20 In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for
25 this type of patron. If the stadium provides the

ability for the patron to selectively opt out of
the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for
example, connect to the system via the Internet,
public switched telephone network, cellular
5 network, and the like, and notify the system that
they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for
example, because they are coming late to the
event. Other means of notifying the system and/or
other reasons may be utilized in connection with
10 the present invention.

In another alternative embodiment, the
system provides patrons the ability to
individually select when their tickets may be re-
15 allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to
only give up their ticket if they are late to the
game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be
willing to give up their ticket if they have not
arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative
20 embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives
for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated
prior to the game because it increases the
stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the
ticket.

The present invention has particular benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold out, but where patrons habitually do not show up. For example, many stadiums are sold out by season ticket holders that do not show up to the game on a regular basis. The present invention permits these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and provide additional patrons a better experience. In addition, the present invention has the benefit of moving the patrons closer to the action/players, and therefore, the ability to support and/or motivate the players to play well. In additional alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide the original ticket holder a portion of the proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation, thereby providing additional incentive to the ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the

geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

5

In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems
10 attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this
15 alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field level would be upgraded first to those seats. Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated
20 to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be
25 combined with additional factors, for example,

relating to subscriber/patron value. As described above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

5 In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and
10 the like. These ratings may then be taken into account in the re-allocation algorithm for future upgrades to the patron.

15 In alternative embodiments, the patrons eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard communication means. For example, standard text-to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may
20 be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

FIG. 29 is a flowchart of a seventh embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 29, the process begins by enrolling members in the program that are interested in the ticket upgrade. Tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. An optional separate check in area is provided for patrons that want to participate in the upgrade program. For example, patrons can optionally check in a predetermined time before the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone, or other manner. The important point is to provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to check in, and if the patron fails to check in using a predetermined procedure, to allow that seat to be provided to another willing

patron in accordance with a process to be described below. Currently, such a process is impossible and unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved seating events have in simply getting the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the event. The present invention represents a revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons with the desirable ticket.

The check in procedure continues for a predetermined period of time until a predetermined time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10 minutes after the event begins, after a predetermined event, such as the second act of a play, and the like. Once the predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-allocation process. To begin the seat re-allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or interested in different or

5 better seats. Such re-allocation processes or
algorithms may include a random process, a
process where priority patrons are given priority
for re-assignment of seat, a process where
10 patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-
assignment to either the theater or the
individual patron whose seat is being provided to
another patron, frequent event patrons, season
ticket patrons, a standard bidding process, or
15 other predetermined process.

 An optional polling process to poll
existing members and non-members in seats to
whether additional seats are available. That is,
15 in another optional embodiment of the present
invention, non-members may also make their seats
available for re-allocation/re-sale at any point
in the process. In this additional polling
process, the next step is to determine whether
20 additional seats have been made available. If
additional seats have been made available, then
these additional seats are added to the list of
available seats.

5 If the patron that is identified by the
re-allocation process is determined to be present
in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone,
wireless device, and/or manual verification, an
optional sub-process determines whether the
patron's optional profile is also satisfied with
the available seating. If the optional subscriber
profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation
process searches for another possible patron. If
10 the optional profile sub-process is satisfied,
then the eligible patron is notified via one or
more means, such as announcement, manually,
wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board,
and/or other means. The patron is then notified
15 and presented with the option of moving for free,
use of award points, additional money to the
theater and/or patron to whose seat is being
provided, or other predetermined criteria to
obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the
20 option to decline, and if so, the process
continues and returns to the re-allocation process
to attempt to locate another possible patron.

25 If the patron accepts, payment of money or
other means may be effectuated on the spot via the

wireless device, credit card, debit card, points,
and the like, and the patron may now move to the
other seat. In addition, the original ticket
holder is optionally reimbursed with award points,
5 a percentage of the revenue, a flat fee, an
additional event ticket that might also be
upgradable, and/or any other means for rewarding
the original ticket holder. The patron's seat may
then optionally be made available as an empty seat
10 to the re-allocation process. If a predetermined
period of time has not expired, then the re-
allocation process may be run again to optionally
continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may
optionally store the up-graded ticket on a
15 wireless device for proof of entrance to the
better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or
row and/or section, includes a separate reader
device to receive optionally the original ticket
that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a
20 new ticket that may optionally be received by the
patron via the wireless device and/or manually via
a worker in the theater or stadium.

In accordance with the invention, as
25 indicated above, when the patron registers for

ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for
example the Internet, the patron may enter payment
information at that time. Accordingly, when the
patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or
5 purchase, the system can automatically charge the
patron without the patron actually
submitting/typing, for example, credit card
information over a wireless device. The tickets of
the present invention may be used to re-allocate
10 patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or
patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium
but were unable to get seats. Since the present
invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very
near to game time in accordance with one
15 embodiment, the patron must be in the general
vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this
embodiment of the invention.

As described above, the patron may be
20 transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual
ticket or a confirmation number that they can use
proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An
optional graphical display via, for example, GPS,
as discussed above may be used to guide the patron
25 to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to

help the patron decide whether to purchase the ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical map of the stadium and/or textual description may be provided to the patron to help the patron
5 decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to accept.

In one alternative embodiment, if the patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to
10 the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated, the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that
15 their seats have changed because they are late. In this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the mistake.

20 In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-
25 allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this

situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

5

In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats. The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

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In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet, public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be willing to give up their ticket if they have not

arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative
embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives
for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated
prior to the game because it increases the
5 stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the
ticket.

The present invention has particular
benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold
10 out, but where patrons habitually do not show up.
For example, many stadiums are sold out by season
ticket holders that do not show up to the game on
a regular basis. The present invention permits
these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance
15 with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and
provide additional patrons a better experience. In
addition, the present invention has the benefit of
moving the patrons closer to the action/players,
and therefore, the ability to support and/or
20 motivate the players to play well. In additional
alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide
the original ticket holder a portion of the
proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation,
thereby providing additional incentive to the
25 ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-

allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above
5 embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the geographic vicinity of the game but that may not
10 currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

In an alternative embodiment, the system
15 determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats
20 that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field
25 level would be upgraded first to those seats.

Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be combined with additional factors, for example, relating to subscriber/patron value. As described above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and the like. These ratings may then be taken into account in the re-allocation algorithm for future upgrades to the patron.

In alternative embodiments, the patrons eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard

communication means. For example, standard text-to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept
5 the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be incorporated into the embodiments described above,
10 and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

FIG. 30 is a flowchart of an eighth embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 30, the process begins by enrolling members in the program that are interested in the ticket upgrade.
15 Tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or
20 manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. An optional separate check in area is provided for patrons that want to participate in the upgrade program. For example, patrons can

optionally check in a predetermined time before
the event through a wireless device, Internet
connection, manual or voice recognition telephone,
or other manner. The important point is to
5 provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to
check in, and if the patron fails to check in
using a predetermined procedure, to allow that
seat to be provided to another willing patron in
accordance with a process to be described below.
10 Currently, such a process is impossible and
unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved
seating events have in simply getting the patrons
seated prior to the beginning of the event. The
present invention represents a revolutionary
15 process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron
loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues
to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons
with the desirable ticket.

20 The seat re-allocation process is used to
re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or
interested in different or better seats. Such re-
allocation processes or algorithms may include a
random process, a process where priority patrons
25 are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a

process where patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to either the theater or the individual patron whose seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, a standard bidding process, or other predetermined process. Simultaneously or subsequently, the check in procedure continues for a predetermined period of time until a predetermined time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10 minutes after the event begins, after a predetermined event, such as the second act of a play, and the like. Once the predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-allocation process.

An optional polling process to poll existing members and non-members in seats to whether additional seats are available. That is, in another optional embodiment of the present invention, non-members may also make their seats available for re-allocation/re-sale at any point in the process. In this additional polling process, the next step is to determine whether

additional seats have been made available. If additional seats have been made available, then these additional seats are added to the list of available seats.

5

If the patron that is identified by the re-allocation process is determined to be present in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone, wireless device, and/or manual verification, an optional sub-process determines whether the patron's optional profile is also satisfied with the available seating. If the optional subscriber profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation process searches for another possible patron. If the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, then the eligible patron is notified via one or more means, such as announcement, manually, wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board, and/or other means. The patron is then notified and presented with the option of moving for free, use of award points, additional money to the theater and/or patron to whose seat is being provided, or other predetermined criteria to obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the option to decline, and if so, the process

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continues and returns to the re-allocation process to attempt to locate another possible patron.

5 If the patron accepts, payment of money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via the wireless device, credit card, debit card, points, and the like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally be made available as an empty seat to the re-
10 allocation process. If a predetermined period of time has not expired, then the re-allocation process may be run again to optionally continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may optionally store the up-graded ticket on a
15 wireless device for proof of entrance to the better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a
20 new ticket that may optionally be received by the patron via the wireless device and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium.

5 In accordance with the invention, as indicated above, when the patron registers for ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for example the Internet, the patron may enter payment information at that time. Accordingly, when the patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, the system can automatically charge the patron without the patron actually submitting/typing, for example, credit card information over a wireless device. The tickets of the present invention may be used to re-allocate patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium but were unable to get seats. Since the present invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very near to game time in accordance with one embodiment, the patron must be in the general vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this embodiment of the invention.

20

As described above, the patron may be transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual ticket or a confirmation number that they can use proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An optional graphical display via, for example, GPS,

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as discussed above may be used to guide the patron to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to help the patron decide whether to purchase the ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical map of the stadium and/or textual description may be provided to the patron to help the patron decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to accept.

In one alternative embodiment, if the patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated, the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that their seats have changed because they are late. In this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the mistake.

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the highest or very high rating that are considered

preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even
5 better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or
10 stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the
15 additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit
20 the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats. The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

25

5 In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet, public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

20 In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be willing to give up their ticket if they have not

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5 arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated prior to the game because it increases the stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the ticket.

10 The present invention has particular benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold out, but where patrons habitually do not show up. For example, many stadiums are sold out by season ticket holders that do not show up to the game on a regular basis. The present invention permits these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and
15 provide additional patrons a better experience. In addition, the present invention has the benefit of moving the patrons closer to the action/players, and therefore, the ability to support and/or motivate the players to play well. In additional
20 alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide the original ticket holder a portion of the proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation, thereby providing additional incentive to the
25 ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-

5 allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

15 In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field level would be upgraded first to those seats.

20

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Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front
5 row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be combined with additional factors, for example, relating to subscriber/patron value. As described
10 above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons
15 may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and the like. These ratings may then be taken into account in the re-allocation algorithm for future
20 upgrades to the patron.

In alternative embodiments, the patrons eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless
25 device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard

communication means. For example, standard text-to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

FIG. 31 is a flowchart of a ninth embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 31, the process begins by enrolling members in the program that are interested in the ticket upgrade. Tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. An optional separate check in area is provided for patrons that want to participate in the upgrade program. For example, patrons can

optionally check in a predetermined time before
the event through a wireless device, Internet
connection, manual or voice recognition telephone,
or other manner. The important point is to
5 provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to
check in, and if the patron fails to check in
using a predetermined procedure, to allow that
seat to be provided to another willing patron in
accordance with a process to be described below.
10 Currently, such a process is impossible and
unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved
seating events have in simply getting the patrons
seated prior to the beginning of the event. The
present invention represents a revolutionary
15 process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron
loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues
to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons
with the desirable ticket.

20 The check in procedure continues for a
predetermined period of time until a predetermined
time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes
before the event begins, 10 minutes after the
event begins, after a predetermined event, such as
25 the second act of a play, and the like. Once the

predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-allocation process. To begin the seat re-allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or interested in different or better seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms may include a random process, a process where priority patrons are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a process where patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to either the theater or the individual patron whose seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, a standard bidding process, or other predetermined process.

An optional polling process to poll existing members and non-members in seats to whether additional seats are available. That is, in another optional embodiment of the present invention, non-members may also make their seats available for re-allocation/re-sale at any point in the process. In this additional polling process, the next step is to determine whether

additional seats have been made available. If additional seats have been made available, then these additional seats are added to the list of available seats.

5

If the patron that is identified by the re-allocation process is determined to be present in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone, wireless device, and/or manual verification, an optional sub-process determines whether the patron's optional profile is also satisfied with the available seating. If the optional subscriber profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation process searches for another possible patron. If the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, then the eligible patron is notified via one or more means, such as announcement, manually, wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board, and/or other means. The patron is then notified and presented with the option of moving for free, use of award points, additional money to the theater and/or patron to whose seat is being provided, or other predetermined criteria to obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the option to decline, and if so, the process

25

continues and returns to the re-allocation process to attempt to locate another possible patron.

5 If no confirmation is received from the patron for a predetermined period of time, the re-allocation process continues to wait until the predetermined period of time has expired. Once the predetermined period of time has expired and there is no response received from the patron
10 provided with the option of changing their seat, the patron is cleared or removed from the eligible list, and the seat is considered or assigned empty status for the re-allocation algorithm to be again implemented.

15

 If the patron accepts and a confirmation is received, payment of money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via the wireless device, credit card, debit card, points, and the
20 like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally be made available as an empty seat to the re-allocation process. If a predetermined period of time has not expired, then the re-allocation

process may be run again to optionally
continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may
optionally store the up-graded ticket on a
wireless device for proof of entrance to the
5 better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or
row and/or section, includes a separate reader
device to receive optionally the original ticket
that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a
new ticket that may optionally be received by the
10 patron via the wireless device and/or manually via
a worker in the theater or stadium.

Of course, the re-allocation algorithm
does not have to be run or implemented one patron
15 at a time, but may be run to re-allocate or re-
assign a plurality of patrons. If one patron or
higher priority patron does not accept, then the
next already generated patron may be queried to
determine whether the next patron desires the seat
20 re-allocation. Further, the system optionally
downloads instructions on how to get to the new
location, and can provide step-by-step
instructions using an optional standard global
positioning system (GPS) incorporated in, or as a
25 separate accessory to, the wireless device.

In accordance with the invention, as indicated above, when the patron registers for ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for
5 example the Internet, the patron may enter payment information at that time. Accordingly, when the patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, the system can automatically charge the patron without the patron actually
10 submitting/typing, for example, credit card information over a wireless device. The tickets of the present invention may be used to re-allocate patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium
15 but were unable to get seats. Since the present invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very near to game time in accordance with one embodiment, the patron must be in the general vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this
20 embodiment of the invention.

As described above, the patron may be transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual ticket or a confirmation number that they can use
25 proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An

optional graphical display via, for example, GPS,
as discussed above may be used to guide the patron
to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to
help the patron decide whether to purchase the
5 ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical
map of the stadium and/or textual description may
be provided to the patron to help the patron
decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to
accept.

10 In one alternative embodiment, if the
patron that has their ticket re-allocated in
error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to
the event based on the predetermined criteria but
the patron was still planning on attending because
15 they forgot about their seat being re-allocated,
the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon
the checking in of the patron and notify them that
their seats have changed because they are late. In
this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to
20 further upgrade the patrons because of the
mistake.

In accordance with one embodiment of the
present invention, the process of the present
25 invention specifically reserves seats of the

highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats. The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

5 In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for 10 example, connect to the system via the Internet, public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the 15 event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

20 In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the 25 game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be

5 willing to give up their ticket if they have not
arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative
embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives
for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated
prior to the game because it increases the
stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the
ticket.

10 The present invention has particular
benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold
out, but where patrons habitually do not show up.
For example, many stadiums are sold out by season
ticket holders that do not show up to the game on
a regular basis. The present invention permits
15 these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance
with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and
provide additional patrons a better experience. In
addition, the present invention has the benefit of
moving the patrons closer to the action/players,
and therefore, the ability to support and/or
20 motivate the players to play well. In additional.
alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide
the original ticket holder a portion of the
proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation,
25 thereby providing additional incentive to the

ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-
5 allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the
10 geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

15 In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations
20 by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the
25 next closest section for example on the field

level would be upgraded first to those seats.
Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for
example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated
to the seats that have now become available from
5 the patrons that have been upgraded to the front
row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme,
the present invention maximizes the re-allocation
numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be
combined with additional factors, for example,
10 relating to subscriber/patron value. As described
above, additional factors may be utilized in the
algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of
subscribers to offer the upgrade.

In alternative embodiments, patrons in the
15 vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons
may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for
example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of
excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and
the like. These ratings may then be taken into
20 account in the re-allocation algorithm for future
upgrades to the patron.

In alternative embodiments, the patrons
eligible for the upgrade may be notified using
25 standard email communications over a wireless

device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard communication means. For example, standard text-to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether
5 an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be
10 incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

FIG. 32 is a flowchart of a tenth embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 32, the
15 process begins by enrolling members in the program that are interested in the ticket upgrade. Tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code
20 readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. An optional separate check in area is provided for patrons that want to participate in

the upgrade program. For example, patrons can optionally check in a predetermined time before the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone, or other manner. The important point is to provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to check in, and if the patron fails to check in using a predetermined procedure, to allow that seat to be provided to another willing patron in accordance with a process to be described below. Currently, such a process is impossible and unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved seating events have in simply getting the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the event. The present invention represents a revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons with the desirable ticket.

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The check in procedure continues for a predetermined period of time until a predetermined time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10 minutes after the event begins, after a predetermined event, such as

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the second act of a play, and the like. Once the predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-
5 allocation process. To begin the seat re-allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or interested in different or better seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms
10 may include a random process, a process where priority patrons are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a process where patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to either the theater or the individual patron whose
15 seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, a standard bidding process, or other predetermined process.

An optional polling process to poll
20 existing members and non-members in seats to whether additional seats are available. That is, in another optional embodiment of the present invention, non-members may also make their seats available for re-allocation/re-sale at any point
25 in the process. In this additional polling

process, the next step is to determine whether additional seats have been made available. If additional seats have been made available, then these additional seats are added to the list of
5 available seats.

If the patron that is identified by the re-allocation process is determined to be present in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone,
10 wireless device, and/or manual verification, an optional sub-process determines whether the patron's optional profile is also satisfied with the available seating. If the optional subscriber profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation
15 process searches for another possible patron. If the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, then the eligible patron is notified via one or more means, such as announcement, manually, wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin
20 board, and/or other means. The patron is then notified and presented with the option of moving for free, use of award points, additional money to the theater and/or patron to whose seat is being provided, or other predetermined criteria to
25 obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the

option to decline, and if so, the process continues and returns to the re-allocation process to attempt to locate another possible patron.

5 If the patron accepts, payment of money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via the wireless device, credit card, debit card, points, and the like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally
10 be made available as an empty seat to the re-allocation process. The process then optionally determines whether there have been additional vacancies, for example, just prior to the event, during the event or as a result of predetermined
15 processes, and empties and/or makes available these additional seats for the event. For example, if standard smart card, standard scanner, standard bluetooth, wireless, or other technology is used in the present invention, additional seats
20 may be made available as patrons leave the event early, for example if diverted for an urgent business meeting, and the like. These additional seats may provide additional opportunities for patron satisfaction, revenue (theater or patrons),
25 advertising, advertising sponsorship for banner

advertising on the wireless device and/or in the theater, and the like. Thus, scanners posted at strategic locations, for example, at the exit of the theater or stadium will confirm that the patron is leaving, and optionally prompt the patron to confirm that they do not plan on returning. This embodiment may optionally be used in other embodiments of the present invention, and vice versa.

10

If a predetermined period of time has not expired, then the re-allocation process may be run again to optionally continuously re-allocate seats while advantageously including the additional seats. The patron may optionally store the upgraded ticket on a wireless device for proof of entrance to the better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a new ticket that may optionally be received by the patron via the wireless device and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium.

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5 In accordance with the invention, as indicated above, when the patron registers for ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for example the Internet, the patron may enter payment information at that time. Accordingly, when the patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, the system can automatically charge the patron without the patron actually submitting/typing, for example, credit card information over a wireless device. The tickets of the present invention may be used to re-allocate patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium but were unable to get seats. Since the present invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very near to game time in accordance with one embodiment, the patron must be in the general vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this embodiment of the invention.

20

As described above, the patron may be transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual ticket or a confirmation number that they can use proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An optional graphical display via, for example, GPS,

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as discussed above may be used to guide the patron to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to help the patron decide whether to purchase the ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical
5 map of the stadium and/or textual description may be provided to the patron to help the patron decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to accept.

In one alternative embodiment, if the
10 patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated,
15 the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that their seats have changed because they are late. In this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the
20 mistake.

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the
25 highest or very high rating that are considered

preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even
5 better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or
10 stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the
15 additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit
20 the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats. The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet, public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be willing to give up their ticket if they have not

arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative
embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives
for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated
prior to the game because it increases the
5 stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the
ticket.

The present invention has particular
benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold
10 out, but where patrons habitually do not show up.
For example, many stadiums are sold out by season
ticket holders that do not show up to the game on
a regular basis. The present invention permits
these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance
15 with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and
provide additional patrons a better experience. In
addition, the present invention has the benefit of
moving the patrons closer to the action/players,
and therefore, the ability to support and/or
20 motivate the players to play well. In additional
alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide
the original ticket holder a portion of the
proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation,
thereby providing additional incentive to the
25 ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-

5 allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

15 In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field level would be upgraded first to those seats.

20

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Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be combined with additional factors, for example, relating to subscriber/patron value. As described above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and the like. These ratings may then be taken into account in the re-allocation algorithm for future upgrades to the patron.

In alternative embodiments, the patrons eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard

communication means. For example, standard text-to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

FIG. 33 is a flowchart of an eleventh embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 33, the process begins by enrolling members in the program that are interested in the ticket upgrade. Tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. An optional separate check in area is provided for patrons that want to participate in the upgrade program. For example, patrons can

optionally check in a predetermined time before the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone, or other manner. The important point is to provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to check in, and if the patron fails to check in using a predetermined procedure, to allow that seat to be provided to another willing patron in accordance with a process to be described below. The patron may check in either a predetermined time before or after the event begins. Currently, such a process is impossible and unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved seating events have in simply getting the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the event. The present invention represents a revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons with the desirable ticket.

The check in procedure continues for a predetermined period of time until a predetermined time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes before the event begins, 10 minutes after the

event begins, after a predetermined event, such as the second act of a play, and the like. Once the predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-allocation process. To begin the seat re-allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or interested in different or better seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms may include a random process, a process where priority patrons are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a process where patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to either the theater or the individual patron whose seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, a standard bidding process, or other predetermined process.

20 An optional polling process to poll existing members and non-members in seats to whether additional seats are available. That is, in another optional embodiment of the present invention, non-members may also make their seats available for re-allocation/re-sale at any point

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in the process. In this additional polling
process, the next step is to determine whether
additional seats have been made available. If
additional seats have been made available, then
5 these additional seats are added to the list of
available seats.

If the patron that is identified by the
re-allocation process is determined to be present
10 in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone,
wireless device, and/or manual verification, an
optional sub-process determines whether the
patron's optional profile is also satisfied with
the available seating. If the optional subscriber
15 profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation
process searches for another possible patron. If
the optional profile sub-process is satisfied,
then the eligible patron is notified via one or
more means, such as announcement, manually,
20 wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board,
and/or other means. The patron is then notified
and presented with the option of moving for free,
use of award points, additional money to the
theater and/or patron to whose seat is being
25 provided, or other predetermined criteria to

obtain the seat. Optionally, a bidding process may be initiated that allows various patrons to bid against one another. Any standard bidding process may optionally be used. The patron, of course has the option to decline, and if so, the process continues and returns to the re-allocation process to attempt to locate another possible patron.

10 The patron is prompted for the method of obtaining the tickets, such as a payment method, such as credit card, debit card, cash, point redemption, or optionally a gift/prize. The patron subsequently selects a payment method. The patron's account is debited at a future time, or optionally immediately via connection to a standard clearinghouse network, such as visa network, master card network or other network via direct connection or via the Internet, and the like. If sufficient funds do not exist, then the person is cleared or rejected from the opportunity for the seat re-allocation/upgrade process. If sufficient funds do exist, then the patron's account is debited or points deducted.

Alternatively, one person may purchase the upgrade on behalf of another person.

5 The patron then moves to the new seat, and
the system then clears the patron's old seat from
the system to optionally provide re-allocation of
the previous seat. As indicated previously, if
the patron accepts, payment of money or other
means may be effectuated on the spot via the
10 wireless device, credit card, debit card, points,
and the like, and the patron may now move to the
other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally
be made available as an empty seat to the re-
allocation process. If a predetermined period of
15 time has not expired, then the re-allocation
process may be run again to optionally
continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may
optionally store the up-graded ticket on a
wireless device for proof of entrance to the
20 better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or
row and/or section, includes a separate reader
device to receive optionally the original ticket
that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a
new ticket that may optionally be received by the

patron via the wireless device and/or manually via
a worker in the theater or stadium.

In accordance with the invention, as
5 indicated above, when the patron registers for
ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for
example the Internet, the patron may enter payment
information at that time. Accordingly, when the
patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or
10 purchase, the system can automatically charge the
patron without the patron actually
submitting/typing, for example, credit card
information over a wireless device. The tickets of
the present invention may be used to re-allocate
15 patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or
patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium
but were unable to get seats. Since the present
invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very
near to game time in accordance with one
20 embodiment, the patron must be in the general
vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this
embodiment of the invention.

As described above, the patron may be transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual ticket or a confirmation number that they can use proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An
5 optional graphical display via, for example, GPS, as discussed above may be used to guide the patron to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to help the patron decide whether to purchase the ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical
10 map of the stadium and/or textual description may be provided to the patron to help the patron decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to accept.

In one alternative embodiment, if the
15 patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated,
20 the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that their seats have changed because they are late. In this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the
25 mistake.

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats.

The map that is handed out may optionally include information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

5

In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet, public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

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In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be willing to give up their ticket if they have not arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated prior to the game because it increases the stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the ticket.

The present invention has particular benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold out, but where patrons habitually do not show up. For example, many stadiums are sold out by season ticket holders that do not show up to the game on a regular basis. The present invention permits these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and provide additional patrons a better experience. In addition, the present invention has the benefit of moving the patrons closer to the action/players,

and therefore, the ability to support and/or motivate the players to play well. In additional alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide the original ticket holder a portion of the
5 proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation, thereby providing additional incentive to the ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage,
10 portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to
15 patrons that, for example, may be in the geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

20

In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems
25 attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations

by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this
5 alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field level would be upgraded first to those seats. Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated
10 to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be
15 combined with additional factors, for example, relating to subscriber/patron value. As described above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

20 In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and
25 the like. These ratings may then be taken into

account in the re-allocation algorithm for future upgrades to the patron.

5 In alternative embodiments, the patrons eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard communication means. For example, standard text-to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may
10 be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

15 As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

20 FIG. 34 is a flowchart of a twelfth embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 34, the process begins by enrolling members in the program that are interested in the ticket upgrade. Tickets are checked in, for example, as the

patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is

5 checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. An optional separate check in area is provided for patrons that want to participate in the upgrade program. For example, patrons can optionally check in a predetermined time before

10 the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone, or other manner. The important point is to provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to check in, and if the patron fails to check in

15 using a predetermined procedure, to allow that seat to be provided to another willing patron in accordance with a process to be described below. Currently, such a process is impossible and unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved

20 seating events have in simply getting the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the event. The present invention represents a revolutionary process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues

25 to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons

with the desirable ticket.

5 The check in procedure continues for a
predetermined period of time until a predetermined
time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes
before the event begins, 10 minutes after the
event begins, after a predetermined event, such as
the second act of a play, and the like. Once the
predetermined time period or event has been
10 completed, the check in procedure may be
considered completed to begin the seat re-
allocation process. To begin the seat re-
allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is
used to re-assign seats for patrons that are
15 willing or interested in different or better
seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms
may include a random process, a process where
priority patrons are given priority for re-
assignment of seat, a process where patrons are
20 willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to
either the theater or the individual patron whose
seat is being provided to another patron, frequent
event patrons, season ticket patrons, a standard
bidding process, or other predetermined process.

An optional polling process to poll existing members and non-members in seats to whether additional seats are available. That is, in another optional embodiment of the present invention, non-members may also make their seats available for re-allocation/re-sale at any point in the process. In this additional polling process, the next step is to determine whether additional seats have been made available. If additional seats have been made available, then these additional seats are added to the list of available seats.

If the patron that is identified by the re-allocation process is determined to be present in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone, wireless device, and/or manual verification, an optional sub-process determines whether the patron's optional profile is also satisfied with the available seating. If the optional subscriber profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation process searches for another possible patron. If the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, then the eligible patron is notified via one or more means, such as announcement, manually,

wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board,
and/or other means. The patron is then notified
and presented with the option of moving for free,
use of award points, additional money to the
5 theater and/or patron to whose seat is being
provided, or other predetermined criteria to
obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the
option to decline, and if so, the process
continues and returns to the re-allocation process
10 to attempt to locate another possible patron.

The patron is prompted for the method of
obtaining the tickets, such as a payment method,
such as credit card, debit card, cash, point
15 redemption, or optionally a gift/prize. The
patron subsequently selects a payment method. The
patron's account is debited at a future time, or
optionally immediately via connection to a
standard clearinghouse network, such as visa
20 network, master card network or other network via
direct connection or via the Internet, and the
like.

5 If sufficient funds do not exist, then the person is cleared or rejected from the opportunity for the seat re-allocation/upgrade process. If sufficient funds do exist, then the patron's account is debited or points deducted. Alternatively, one person may purchase the upgrade on behalf of another person.

10 The patron then moves to the new seat, and the system then clears the patron's old seat from the system to optionally provide re-allocation of the previous seat. As indicated previously, if the patron accepts, payment of money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via the
15 wireless device, credit card, debit card, points, and the like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. In addition, the original ticket holder is optionally reimbursed with award points, a percentage of the revenue, a flat fee, an
20 additional event ticket that might also be upgradable, and/or any other means for rewarding the original ticket holder. The patron's seat may then optionally be made available as an empty seat to the re-allocation process. If a predetermined
25 period of time has not expired, then the re-

allocation process may be run again to optionally
continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may
optionally store the up-graded ticket on a
wireless device for proof of entrance to the
5 better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or
row and/or section, includes a separate reader
device to receive optionally the original ticket
that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a
new ticket that may optionally be received by the
10 patron via the wireless device and/or manually via
a worker in the theater or stadium.

In accordance with the invention, as
indicated above, when the patron registers for
15 ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for
example the Internet, the patron may enter payment
information at that time. Accordingly, when the
patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or
purchase, the system can automatically charge the
20 patron without the patron actually
submitting/typing, for example, credit card
information over a wireless device. The tickets of
the present invention may be used to re-allocate
patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or
25 patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium

but were unable to get seats. Since the present invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very near to game time in accordance with one embodiment, the patron must be in the general vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this embodiment of the invention.

As described above, the patron may be transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual ticket or a confirmation number that they can use proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An optional graphical display via, for example, GPS, as discussed above may be used to guide the patron to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to help the patron decide whether to purchase the ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical map of the stadium and/or textual description may be provided to the patron to help the patron decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to accept.

In one alternative embodiment, if the patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because

they forgot about their seat being re-allocated,
the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon
the checking in of the patron and notify them that
their seats have changed because they are late. In
5 this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to
further upgrade the patrons because of the
mistake.

In accordance with one embodiment of the
10 present invention, the process of the present
invention specifically reserves seats of the
highest or very high rating that are considered
preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-
allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this
15 situation, the patron who has had their seat re-
allocated because they will likely receive an even
better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium
or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

20 In another embodiment of the present
invention, as patrons are entering the venue or
stadium, they are provided advantageously with a
map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the
potential upgrade to make a decision whether the

upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value
to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the
additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map
of the stadium, the process of the the present
5 invention is not required to transmit a detailed
schematic to the patron's wireless device which
would not normally be able to effectively permit
the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats.
The map that is handed out may optionally include
10 information for patrons on where to register for
the upgrade and/or additional advertisement
opportunities.

In one alternative embodiment, the patron
15 that has purchased the ticket, for example, a
season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that
for a particular game, set of games or all games,
they do not want their seats to be re-allocated,
and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for
20 this type of patron. If the stadium provides the
ability for the patron to selectively opt out of
the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for
example, connect to the system via the Internet,
public switched telephone network, cellular
25 network, and the like, and notify the system that

they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with
5 the present invention.

In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to
10 only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be willing to give up their ticket if they have not arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative
15 embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated prior to the game because it increases the stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the ticket.

20

The present invention has particular benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold out, but where patrons habitually do not show up. For example, many stadiums are sold out by season

ticket holders that do not show up to the game on a regular basis. The present invention permits these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and provide additional patrons a better experience. In addition, the present invention has the benefit of moving the patrons closer to the action/players, and therefore, the ability to support and/or motivate the players to play well. In additional alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide the original ticket holder a portion of the proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation, thereby providing additional incentive to the ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the geographic vicinity of the game but that may not currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

In an alternative embodiment, the system determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field level would be upgraded first to those seats. Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be combined with additional factors, for example, relating to subscriber/patron value. As described above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

5 In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and the like. These ratings may then be taken into account in the re-allocation algorithm for future upgrades to the patron.

10 In alternative embodiments, the patrons eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard communication means. For example, standard text-
15 to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

20 As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

FIG. 35 is a flowchart of a thirteenth embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 35, the process begins by enrolling members in the program that are interested in the ticket upgrade.

5 Tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is
10 checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. An optional separate check in area is provided for patrons that want to participate in the upgrade program. For example, patrons can optionally check in a predetermined time before
15 the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone, or other manner. The important point is to provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to check in, and if the patron fails to check in
20 using a predetermined procedure, to allow that seat to be provided to another willing patron in accordance with a process to be described below. Currently, such a process is impossible and
25 unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved seating events have in simply getting the patrons seated prior to the beginning of the event. The

present invention represents a revolutionary
process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron
loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues
to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons
5 with the desirable ticket.

The seat re-allocation process is used to
re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or
interested in different or better seats. Such re-
10 allocation processes or algorithms may include a
random process, a process where priority patrons
are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a
process where patrons are willing to pay
additional for the re-assignment to either the
15 theater or the individual patron whose seat is
being provided to another patron, frequent event
patrons, season ticket patrons, a standard bidding
process, or other predetermined process.
Simultaneously or subsequently, the check in
20 procedure continues for a predetermined period of
time until a predetermined time period has
expired, for example, 5 minutes before the event
begins, 10 minutes after the event begins, after a
predetermined event, such as the second act of a
25 play, and the like. Once the predetermined time

period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-allocation process.

5 An optional polling process to poll
existing members and non-members in seats to
whether additional seats are available. That is,
in another optional embodiment of the present
invention, non-members may also make their seats
10 available for re-allocation/re-sale at any point
in the process. In this additional polling
process, the next step is to determine whether
additional seats have been made available. If
additional seats have been made available, then
15 these additional seats are added to the list of
available seats.

 If the patron that is identified by the
re-allocation process is determined to be present
20 in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone,
wireless device, and/or manual verification, an
optional sub-process determines whether the
patron's optional profile is also satisfied with
the available seating. If the optional subscriber

profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation process searches for another possible patron. If the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, then the eligible patron is notified via one or
5 more means, such as announcement, manually, wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board, and/or other means. The patron is then notified and presented with the option of moving for free, use of award points, additional money to the
10 theater and/or patron to whose seat is being provided, or other predetermined criteria to obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the option to decline, and if so, the process continues and returns to the re-allocation process
15 to attempt to locate another possible patron.

The patron is prompted for the method of obtaining the tickets, such as a payment method, such as credit card, debit card, cash, point
20 redemption, or optionally a gift/prize. The patron subsequently selects a payment method. The patron's account is debited at a future time, or optionally immediately via connection to a standard clearinghouse network, such as visa
25 network, master card network or other network via

direct connection or via the Internet, and the like. If sufficient funds do not exist, then the person is cleared or rejected from the opportunity for the seat re-allocation/upgrade process. If
5 sufficient funds do exist, then the patron's account is debited or points deducted. Alternatively, one person may purchase the upgrade on behalf of another person.

10 The patron then moves to the new seat, and the system then clears the patron's old seat from the system to optionally provide re-allocation of the previous seat. As indicated previously, if the patron accepts, payment of money or other
15 means may be effectuated on the spot via the wireless device, credit card, debit card, points, and the like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally be made available as an empty seat to the re-
20 allocation process. If a predetermined period of time has not expired, then the re-allocation process may be run again to optionally continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may optionally store the up-graded ticket on a
25 wireless device for proof of entrance to the

better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a
5 new ticket that may optionally be received by the patron via the wireless device and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium.

FIG. 36 is a flowchart of a fourteenth
10 embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 36, the process begins by enrolling members in the program that are interested in the ticket upgrade. Tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a
15 stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. An optional separate check in area is
20 provided for patrons that want to participate in the upgrade program. For example, patrons can optionally check in a predetermined time before the event through a wireless device, Internet connection, manual or voice recognition telephone,
25 or other manner. The important point is to

provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to
check in, and if the patron fails to check in
using a predetermined procedure, to allow that
seat to be provided to another willing patron in
5 accordance with a process to be described below.
Currently, such a process is impossible and
unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved
seating events have in simply getting the patrons
seated prior to the beginning of the event. The
10 present invention represents a revolutionary
process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron
loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues
to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons
with the desirable ticket.

15

The check in procedure continues for a
predetermined period of time until a predetermined
time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes
before the event begins, 10 minutes after the
20 event begins, after a predetermined event, such as
the second act of a play, and the like. Once the
predetermined time period or event has been
completed, the check in procedure may be
considered completed to begin the seat re-
25 allocation process. To begin the seat re-

allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or interested in different or better seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms
5 may include a random process, a process where priority patrons are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a process where patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to either the theater or the individual patron whose
10 seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, a standard bidding process, or other predetermined process.

An optional polling process to poll
15 existing members and non-members in seats to whether additional seats are available. That is, in another optional embodiment of the present invention, non-members may also make their seats available for re-allocation/re-sale at any point
20 in the process. In this additional polling process, the next step is to determine whether additional seats have been made available. If additional seats have been made available, then these additional seats are added to the list of
25 available seats.

5 If the patron that is identified by the
re-allocation process is determined to be present
in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone,
wireless device, and/or manual verification, an
optional sub-process determines whether the
patron's optional profile is also satisfied with
the available seating. If the optional subscriber
profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation
10 process searches for another possible patron. If
the optional profile sub-process is satisfied,
then the eligible patron is notified via one or
more means, such as announcement, manually,
wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board,
15 and/or other means. The patron is then notified
and presented with the option of moving for free,
use of award points, additional money to the
theater and/or patron to whose seat is being
provided, or other predetermined criteria to
20 obtain the seat. The patron, of course has the
option to decline, and if so, the process
continues and returns to the re-allocation process
to attempt to locate another possible patron.

The patron is prompted for the method of obtaining the tickets, such as a payment method, such as credit card, debit card, cash, point redemption, or optionally a gift/prize. The patron subsequently selects a payment method. The patron's account is debited at a future time, or optionally immediately via connection to a standard clearinghouse network, such as visa network, master card network or other network via direct connection or via the Internet, and the like. If sufficient funds do not exist, then the person is cleared or rejected from the opportunity for the seat re-allocation/upgrade process. If sufficient funds do exist, then the patron's account is debited or points deducted. Alternatively, one person may purchase the upgrade on behalf of another person.

The patron then moves to the new seat, and the system then clears the patron's old seat from the system to optionally provide re-allocation of the previous seat.

If no confirmation is received from the patron for a predetermined period of time, the re-allocation process continues to wait until the predetermined period of time has expired. Once
5 the predetermined period of time has expired and there is no response received from the patron provided with the option of changing their seat, the patron is cleared or removed from the eligible list, and the seat is considered or assigned empty
10 status for the re-allocation algorithm to be again implemented.

As indicated previously, if the patron accepts and a confirmation is received, payment of
15 money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via the wireless device, credit card, debit card, points, and the like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally be made available as an empty seat
20 to the re-allocation process. If a predetermined period of time has not expired, then the re-allocation process may be run again to optionally continuously re-allocate seats. The patron may optionally store the up-graded ticket on a
25 wireless device for proof of entrance to the

better seating area. Optionally, the seat and/or row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a
5 new ticket that may optionally be received by the patron via the wireless device and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium.

Of course, the re-allocation algorithm
10 does not have to be run or implemented one patron at a time, but may be run to re-allocate or re-assign a plurality of patrons. If one patron or higher priority patron does not accept, then the next already generated patron may be queried to
15 determine whether the next patron desires the seat re-allocation. Further, the system optionally downloads instructions on how to get to the new location, and can provide step-by-step instructions using an optional standard global
20 positioning system (GPS) incorporated in, or as a separate accessory to, the wireless device.

In accordance with the invention, as indicated above, when the patron registers for

ticket re-allocation and/or purchase, via for
example the Internet, the patron may enter payment
information at that time. Accordingly, when the
patron accepts the ticket re-allocation and/or
5 purchase, the system can automatically charge the
patron without the patron actually
submitting/typing, for example, credit card
information over a wireless device. The tickets of
the present invention may be used to re-allocate
10 patrons that are sitting in the stadium and/or
patrons that may be in the vicinity of the stadium
but were unable to get seats. Since the present
invention re-allocates and/or sells tickets very
near to game time in accordance with one
15 embodiment, the patron must be in the general
vicinity of the stadium to take advantage of this
embodiment of the invention.

As described above, the patron may be
20 transmitted, for example, emailed, the actual
ticket or a confirmation number that they can use
proceed to their seat and/or re-allocated seat. An
optional graphical display via, for example, GPS,
as discussed above may be used to guide the patron
25 to the new location upon acceptance, as well as to

help the patron decide whether to purchase the ticket and/or upgrade. For example, a graphical map of the stadium and/or textual description may be provided to the patron to help the patron
5 decide the quality of the upgrade and whether to accept.

In one alternative embodiment, if the patron that has their ticket re-allocated in error, e.g., because the patron did not show up to
10 the event based on the predetermined criteria but the patron was still planning on attending because they forgot about their seat being re-allocated, the system can re-allocate seats immediately upon the checking in of the patron and notify them that
15 their seats have changed because they are late. In this situation, the stadium/venue might decide to further upgrade the patrons because of the mistake.

20 In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the process of the present invention specifically reserves seats of the highest or very high rating that are considered preferred, in the event a patron's seat is re-
25 allocated prematurely or erroneously. In this

situation, the patron who has had their seat re-allocated because they will likely receive an even better seat as a result of the mistaken (stadium or patron) or premature seat re-allocation.

5

In another embodiment of the present invention, as patrons are entering the venue or stadium, they are provided advantageously with a map of the stadium so patrons can analyze the potential upgrade to make a decision whether the
10 upgraded seats are sufficiently good or of value to warrant the patron moving and/or paying for the additional upgrade. By handing the patron the map of the stadium, the process of the the present
15 invention is not required to transmit a detailed schematic to the patron's wireless device which would not normally be able to effectively permit the patron to evaluate the proposed upgrade seats. The map that is handed out may optionally include
20 information for patrons on where to register for the upgrade and/or additional advertisement opportunities.

In one alternative embodiment, the patron that has purchased the ticket, for example, a season ticket holder, may advise the stadium that for a particular game, set of games or all games, they do not want their seats to be re-allocated, and perhaps, an additional fee is assessed for this type of patron. If the stadium provides the ability for the patron to selectively opt out of the seat re-allocation, the patron can, for example, connect to the system via the Internet, public switched telephone network, cellular network, and the like, and notify the system that they do not want their ticket re-allocated, for example, because they are coming late to the event. Other means of notifying the system and/or other reasons may be utilized in connection with the present invention.

In another alternative embodiment, the system provides patrons the ability to individually select when their tickets may be re-allocated. For example, one patron may prefer to only give up their ticket if they are late to the game by 15 minutes, while another patron may be willing to give up their ticket if they have not

arrived 15 minutes before the game. In alternative
embodiments, the stadium may provide incentives
for the patron to have their ticket re-allocated
prior to the game because it increases the
5 stadiums chances of re-allocating/re-selling the
ticket.

The present invention has particular
benefits for stadiums that are constantly sold
10 out, but where patrons habitually do not show up.
For example, many stadiums are sold out by season
ticket holders that do not show up to the game on
a regular basis. The present invention permits
these tickets to be re-allocated in accordance
15 with, for example, predetermined algorithms, and
provide additional patrons a better experience. In
addition, the present invention has the benefit of
moving the patrons closer to the action/players,
and therefore, the ability to support and/or
20 motivate the players to play well. In additional
alternative embodiments, the stadium may provide
the original ticket holder a portion of the
proceeds as a result of the ticket re-allocation,
thereby providing additional incentive to the
25 ticket holder to permit their ticket to be re-

allocated (when this is a voluntary program in the stadium). The stadium may then keep a percentage, portion or service fee from the resale and/or re-allocation of the ticket. Of course, the above
5 embodiment may further apply to yet another embodiment where the stadium does not offer the upgrade to patrons sitting in the stadium, but to patrons that, for example, may be in the geographic vicinity of the game but that may not
10 currently have any tickets or that may be willing to purchase the tickets when availability is determined and to travel to the event.

In an alternative embodiment, the system
15 determines priority of re-allocation of seats based first upon patrons that have seats that may also be re-allocated. That is, the systems attempts to maximize the number of re-allocations by prioritizing the re-allocation based upon seats
20 that may be re-allocated after already being re-allocated. For example, if front row seats in a stadium are available to be re-allocated, in this alternative embodiment, patrons that are in the next closest section for example on the field
25 level would be upgraded first to those seats.

Then, patrons with less preferred seats, for example, in the upper deck would be re-allocated to the seats that have now become available from the patrons that have been upgraded to the front row. Thus, using this alternative priority scheme, the present invention maximizes the re-allocation numbers. Of course, this priority algorithm may be combined with additional factors, for example, relating to subscriber/patron value. As described above, additional factors may be utilized in the algorithm to determine the subscriber or set of subscribers to offer the upgrade.

In alternative embodiments, patrons in the vicinity of the upgraded and re-allocated patrons may optionally rate the upgraded patron, for example, for appropriate behavior, wearing of excessively large hats, drunkenness behavior, and the like. These ratings may then be taken into account in the re-allocation algorithm for future upgrades to the patron.

In alternative embodiments, the patrons eligible for the upgrade may be notified using standard email communications over a wireless device, mobile telephone, and/or other standard

communication means. For example, standard text-to-voice and/or voice-to-text communications may be used to contact the patron to evaluate whether an upgrade will be accepted and to actually accept the upgrade.

As discussed above, one or more of the above alternative embodiments may be incorporated into the embodiments described above, and/or any of the embodiments discussed below.

FIG. 37 is a flowchart of a fifteenth embodiment of the invention. In FIG. 37, the process begins by enrolling members in the program that are interested in the ticket upgrade. Tickets are checked in, for example, as the patrons enter the reserved seating area, such as a stadium or theater, through, for example, bar code readers, scanners, infrared readers, and/or manually or other method where the patron is checked in, either at the gate, seat or other location. An optional separate check in area is provided for patrons that want to participate in the upgrade program. For example, patrons can

optionally check in a predetermined time before
the event through a wireless device, Internet
connection, manual or voice recognition telephone,
or other manner. The important point is to
5 provide a standard manner for allowing patrons to
check in, and if the patron fails to check in
using a predetermined procedure, to allow that
seat to be provided to another willing patron in
accordance with a process to be described below.
10 Currently, such a process is impossible and
unthinkable in view of the difficulty reserved
seating events have in simply getting the patrons
seated prior to the beginning of the event. The
present invention represents a revolutionary
15 process to enhance event enjoyment, earn patron
loyalty and optionally provide additional revenues
to the theater/stadium or optionally other patrons
with the desirable ticket.

20 The check in procedure continues for a
predetermined period of time until a predetermined
time period has expired, for example, 5 minutes
before the event begins, 10 minutes after the
event begins, after a predetermined event, such as
25 the second act of a play, and the like. Once the

predetermined time period or event has been completed, the check in procedure may be considered completed to begin the seat re-allocation process. To begin the seat re-allocation process, a re-allocation algorithm is used to re-assign seats for patrons that are willing or interested in different or better seats. Such re-allocation processes or algorithms may include a random process, a process where priority patrons are given priority for re-assignment of seat, a process where patrons are willing to pay additional for the re-assignment to either the theater or the individual patron whose seat is being provided to another patron, frequent event patrons, season ticket patrons, a standard bidding process, or other predetermined process.

An optional polling process to poll existing members and non-members in seats to whether additional seats are available. That is, in another optional embodiment of the present invention, non-members may also make their seats available for re-allocation/re-sale at any point in the process. In this additional polling process, the next step is to determine whether

additional seats have been made available. If additional seats have been made available, then these additional seats are added to the list of available seats.

5

If the patron that is identified by the re-allocation process is determined to be present in the theater, for example, via mobile telephone, wireless device, and/or manual
10 verification, an optional sub-process determines whether the patron's optional profile is also satisfied with the available seating. If the optional subscriber profile is not satisfied, then the re-allocation process searches for
15 another possible patron. If the optional profile sub-process is satisfied, then the eligible patron is notified via one or more means, such as announcement, manually, wireless device, mobile telephone, bulletin board, and/or other means.
20 The patron is then notified and presented with the option of moving for free, use of award points, additional money to the theater and/or patron to whose seat is being provided, or other predetermined criteria to obtain the seat. The
25 patron, of course has the option to decline, and

if so, the process continues and returns to the re-allocation process to attempt to locate another possible patron.

5 The patron is prompted for the method of obtaining the tickets, such as a payment method, such as credit card, debit card, cash, point redemption, or optionally a gift/prize. The patron subsequently selects a payment method. The
10 patron's account is debited at a future time, or optionally immediately via connection to a standard clearinghouse network, such as visa network, master card network or other network via direct connection or via the Internet, and the
15 like. If sufficient funds do not exist, then the person is cleared or rejected from the opportunity for the seat re-allocation/upgrade process. If sufficient funds do exist, then the patron's account is debited or points deducted.
20 Alternatively, one person may purchase the upgrade on behalf of another person.

 The patron then moves to the new seat, and the system then clears the patron's old seat from

the system to optionally provide re-allocation of the previous seat. As indicated previously, if the patron accepts, payment of money or other means may be effectuated on the spot via the wireless device, credit card, debit card, points, and the like, and the patron may now move to the other seat. The patron's seat may then optionally be made available as an empty seat to the re-allocation process. The process then optionally determines whether there have been additional vacancies, for example, just prior to the event, during the event or as a result of predetermined processes, and empties and/or makes available these additional seats for the event. For example, if standard smart card, standard scanner, standard bluetooth, wireless, or other technology is used in the present invention, additional seats may be made available as patrons leave the event early, for example if diverted for an urgent business meeting, and the like. These additional seats may provide additional opportunities for patron satisfaction, revenue (theater or patrons), advertising, advertising sponsorship for banner advertising on the wireless device and/or in the theater, and the like. Thus, scanners posted at strategic locations, for example, at the exit of

the theater or stadium will confirm that the patron is leaving, and optionally prompt the patron to confirm that they do not plan on returning. This embodiment may optionally be used
5 in other embodiments of the present invention, and vice versa.

If a predetermined period of time has not expired, then the re-allocation process may be run
10 again to optionally continuously re-allocate seats while advantageously including the additional seats. The patron may optionally store the upgraded ticket on a wireless device for proof of entrance to the better seating area. Optionally,
15 the seat and/or row and/or section, includes a separate reader device to receive optionally the original ticket that is now re-allocated to a better seat, or a new ticket that may optionally be received by the patron via the wireless device
20 and/or manually via a worker in the theater or stadium.

FIG. 38 is an illustration of a main central processing unit for implementing the computer
25 processing in accordance with a computer

implemented embodiment of the present invention.
The procedures described above may be presented in
terms of program procedures executed on, for
example, a computer or network of computers.

5

Viewed externally in FIG. 38, a computer
system designated by reference numeral 40 has a
central processing unit 42 having disk drives 44
and 46. Disk drive indications 44 and 46 are
10 merely symbolic of a number of disk drives which
might be accommodated by the computer system.
Typically these would include a floppy disk drive
such as 44, a hard disk drive (not shown
externally) and a CD ROM indicated by slot 46.
15 The number and type of drives varies, typically
with different computer configurations. Disk
drives 44 and 46 are in fact optional, and for
space considerations, may easily be omitted from
the computer system used in conjunction with the
20 production process/apparatus described herein.

The computer also has an optional display 48
upon which information is displayed. In some
situations, a keyboard 50 and a mouse 52 may be
25 provided as input devices to interface with the
central processing unit 42. Then again, for

enhanced portability, the keyboard 50 may be
either a limited function keyboard or omitted in
its entirety. In addition, mouse 52 may be a
touch pad control device, or a track ball device,
5 or even omitted in its entirety as well. In
addition, the computer system also optionally
includes at least one infrared transmitter 76
and/or infrared receiver 78 for either
transmitting and/or receiving infrared signals, as
10 described below.

FIG. 39 illustrates a block diagram of the
internal hardware of the computer of FIG. 38. A
bus 56 serves as the main information highway
15 interconnecting the other components of the
computer. CPU 58 is the central processing unit
of the system, performing calculations and logic
operations required to execute a program. Read
only memory (ROM) 60 and random access memory
20 (RAM) 62 constitute the main memory of the
computer. Disk controller 64 interfaces one or
more disk drives to the system bus 56. These disk
drives may be floppy disk drives such as 70, or CD
ROM or DVD (digital video disks) drive such as 66,
25 or internal or external hard drives 68. As

indicated previously, these various disk drives and disk controllers are optional devices.

5 A display interface 72 interfaces display 48 and permits information from the bus 56 to be displayed on the display 48. Again as indicated, display 48 is also an optional accessory. For example, display 48 could be substituted or
10 omitted. Communication with external devices, for example, the components of the apparatus described herein, occurs utilizing communication port 74. For example, optical fibers and/or electrical cables and/or conductors and/or optical
15 communication (e.g., infrared, and the like) and/or wireless communication (e.g., radio frequency (RF), and the like) can be used as the transport medium between the external devices and communication port 74.

20 In addition to the standard components of the computer, the computer also optionally includes at least one of infrared transmitter 76 or infrared receiver 78. Infrared transmitter 76 is utilized
25 when the computer system is used in conjunction with one or more of the processing

components/stations that transmits/receives data
via infrared signal transmission.

FIG. 40 is a block diagram of the internal
5 hardware of the computer of FIG. 38 in accordance
with a second embodiment. In FIG. 40, instead of
utilizing an infrared transmitter or infrared
receiver, the computer system uses at least one of
a low power radio transmitter 80 and/or a low
10 power radio receiver 82. The low power radio
transmitter 80 transmits the signal for reception
by components of the production process, and
receives signals from the components via the low
power radio receiver 82. The low power radio
15 transmitter and/or receiver 80, 82 are standard
devices in industry.

FIG. 41 is an illustration of an exemplary
memory medium which can be used with disk drives
20 illustrated in FIGs. 38-40. Typically, memory
media such as floppy disks, or a CD ROM, or a
digital video disk will contain, for example, a
multi-byte locale for a single byte language and
the program information for controlling the
25 computer to enable the computer to perform the
functions described herein. Alternatively, ROM 60

and/or RAM 62 illustrated in FIGs. 37-38 can also
be used to store the program information that is
used to instruct the central processing unit 58 to
perform the operations associated with the
5 production process.

Although processing system 40 is illustrated
having a single processor, a single hard disk
drive and a single local memory, processing system
10 40 may suitably be equipped with any multitude or
combination of processors or storage devices.
Processing system 40 may, in point of fact, be
replaced by, or combined with, any suitable
processing system operative in accordance with the
15 principles of the present invention, including
sophisticated calculators, and hand-held,
laptop/notebook, mini, mainframe and super
computers, as well as processing system network
combinations of the same.

20

Conventional processing system architecture
is more fully discussed in Computer Organization
and Architecture, by William Stallings, MacMillan
Publishing Co. (3rd ed. 1993); conventional
25 processing system network design is more fully
discussed in Data Network Design, by Darren L.

Spohn, McGraw-Hill, Inc. (1993), and conventional data communications is more fully discussed in Data Communications Principles, by R.D. Gitlin, J.F. Hayes and S.B. Weinstein, Plenum Press (1992) and in The Irwin Handbook of Telecommunications, by James Harry Green, Irwin Professional Publishing (2nd ed. 1992). Each of the foregoing publications is incorporated herein by reference.

Alternatively, the hardware configuration may be arranged according to the multiple instruction multiple data (MIMD) multiprocessor format for additional computing efficiency. The details of this form of computer architecture are disclosed in greater detail in, for example, U.S. Patent No. 5,163,131; Boxer, A., Where Buses Cannot Go, IEEE Spectrum, February 1995, pp. 41-45; and Barroso, L.A. et al., RPM: A Rapid Prototyping Engine for Multiprocessor Systems, IEEE Computer February 1995, pp. 26-34, all of which are incorporated herein by reference.

In alternate preferred embodiments, the above-identified processor, and in particular microprocessing circuit 58, may be replaced by or combined with any other suitable processing

circuits, including programmable logic devices,
such as PALs (programmable array logic) and PLAs
(programmable logic arrays). DSPs (digital signal
processors), FPGAs (field programmable gate
5 arrays), ASICs (application specific integrated
circuits), VLSIs (very large scale integrated
circuits) or the like.

FIG. 42 is an illustration of the functional
10 operation of the main central processing system
illustrated in FIGs. 38-41. In FIG. 42, main
central processing unit 40 interfaces with various
external databases 85-88 to obtain the necessary
information for tracking the performance of the
15 resources. Main central processing unit 40 may be
hardwired or directly connected to databases 85-
88, or alternatively, access databases 85-88 via a
private and/or public network 89.

20 Main central processing unit 40 is connected
to an output device 90 for generating the report.
The output device 90 may be a printer, or other
output device such as a facsimile, electronic
mail, and the like. Main central processing unit
25 40 includes, for example, a client manager module
91, such as Broker's Ally manufactured by Scherrer

Resources, Inc. of Philadelphia, PA that may be modified to perform the functions described herein.

5 Main central processing unit 40 includes, for example, a transaction tracking or logging module 92, such as the functionality provided by the Excel Software package manufactured by Microsoft Corporation that may be modified to
10 perform the functions described herein. Main central processing unit 40 also includes, for example, a manager/report generator module 91, such as Axys manufactured by Advent Software, Inc. of San Francisco, CA, that may be modified to
15 perform the functions described herein. Other suitable software packages are also available that may be modified to perform the functions described herein.

20 It should be noted that while the above process was described with reference to the figures, in essence, the various steps of the present invention are performed in hardware. Accordingly, each step of the present invention
25 typically generates a physical electrical signal

which represents a physical result of a specific step described in the flow charts. The flow charts represent physical electrical signals which are generated and used in subsequent steps of the process. Therefore, the flowcharts represent the transforming of physical electrical signals representing physical characteristics and quantities into other physical electrical signals also representing transformed physical characteristics.

The Internet is not a physical or tangible entity, but rather a giant network which interconnects innumerable smaller groups of linked computer networks. It is thus a network of networks. This is best understood if one considers what a linked group of computers -- referred to here as a "network" - is, and what it does. Small networks are now ubiquitous (and are often called "local area networks"). For example, in many United States Courthouses, computers are linked to each other for the purpose of exchanging files and messages (and to share equipment such as printers). These are networks.

Some networks are "closed" networks, not
linked to other computers or networks. Many
networks, however, are connected to other networks,
which are in turn connected to other networks in a
5 manner which permits each computer in any network
to communicate with computers on any other network
in the system. This global Web of linked networks
and computers is referred to as the Internet.

10 The nature of the Internet is such that it
is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine
its size at a given moment. It is indisputable,
however, that the Internet has experienced
extraordinary growth in recent years. In 1981,
15 fewer than 300 computers were linked to the
Internet, and by 1989, the number stood at fewer
than 90,000 computers. By 1993, over 1,000,000
computers were linked. Today, over 9,400,000 host
computers worldwide, of which approximately 60
20 percent located within the United States, are
estimated to be linked to the Internet. This count
does not include the personal computers people use
to access the Internet using modems. In all,
reasonable estimates are that as many as 40 million
25 people around the world can and do access the
enormously flexible communication Internet medium.

That figure is expected to grow to 200 million Internet users by the year 1999.

5 Some of the computers and computer networks
that make up the Internet are owned by governmental
and public institutions, some are owned by
non-profit organizations, and some are privately
owned. The resulting whole is a decentralized,
global medium of communications -- or "cyberspace"
10 -- that links people, institutions, corporations,
and governments around the world. The Internet is
an international system. This communications medium
allows any of the literally tens of millions of
people with access to the Internet to exchange
15 information. These communications can occur almost
instantaneously, and can be directed either to
specific individuals, to a broader group of people
interested in a particular subject, or to the world
as a whole.

20

 The Internet had its origins in 1969 as an
experimental project of the Advanced Research
Project Agency ("ARPA"), and was called ARPANET.
This network linked computers and computer networks
25 owned by the military, defense contractors, and
university laboratories conducting defense-related

research. The network later allowed researchers across the country to access directly and to use extremely powerful supercomputers located at a few key universities and laboratories. As it evolved
5 far beyond its research origins in the United States to encompass universities, corporations, and people around the world, the ARPANET came to be called the "DARPA Internet," and finally just the "Internet."

10

From its inception, the network was designed to be a decentralized, self-maintaining series of redundant links between computers and computer networks, capable of rapidly transmitting
15 communications without direct human involvement or control, and with the automatic ability to re-route communications if one or more individual links were damaged or otherwise unavailable. Among other goals, this redundant system of linked computers
20 was designed to allow vital research and communications to continue even if portions of the network were damaged, say, in a war.

To achieve this resilient nationwide (and
25 ultimately global) communications medium, the ARPANET encouraged the creation of multiple links

to and from each computer (or computer network) on the network. Thus, a computer located in Washington, D.C., might be linked (usually using dedicated telephone lines) to other computers in neighboring states or on the Eastern seaboard. Each of those computers could in turn be linked to other computers, which themselves would be linked to other computers.

A communication sent over this redundant series of linked computers could travel any of a number of routes to its destination. Thus, a message sent from a computer in Washington, D.C., to a computer in Palo Alto, California, might first be sent to a computer in Philadelphia, and then be forwarded to a computer in Pittsburgh, and then to Chicago, Denver, and Salt Lake City, before finally reaching Palo Alto. If the message could not travel along that path (because of military attack, simple technical malfunction, or other reason), the message would automatically (without human intervention or even knowledge) be re-routed, perhaps, from Washington, D.C. to Richmond, and then to Atlanta, New Orleans, Dallas, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, and finally to Palo Alto. This type

of transmission, and re-routing, would likely occur in a matter of seconds.

5 Messages between computers on the Internet do not necessarily travel entirely along the same path. The Internet uses "packet switching" communication protocols that allow individual messages to be subdivided into smaller "packets" that are then sent independently to the
10 destination, and are then automatically reassembled by the receiving computer. While all packets of a given message often travel along the same path to the destination, if computers along the route become overloaded, then packets can be re-routed to
15 less loaded computers.

 At the same time that ARPANET was maturing (it subsequently ceased to exist), similar networks developed to link universities, research
20 facilities, businesses, and individuals around the world. These other formal or loose networks included BITNET, CSNET, FIDONET, and USENET. Eventually, each of these networks (many of which overlapped) were themselves linked together,
25 allowing users of any computers linked to any one of the networks to transmit communications to users

of computers on other networks. It is this series of linked networks (themselves linking computers and computer networks) that is today commonly known as the Internet.

5

No single entity -- academic, corporate, governmental, or non-profit -- administers the Internet. It exists and functions as a result of the fact that hundreds of thousands of separate operators of computers and computer networks independently decided to use common data transfer protocols to exchange communications and information with other computers (which in turn exchange communications and information with still other computers). There is no centralized storage location, control point, or communications channel for the Internet, and it would not be technically feasible for a single entity to control all of the information conveyed on the Internet.

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15
20

How Individuals Access the Internet

Individuals have a wide variety of avenues to access cyberspace in general, and the Internet in particular. In terms of physical access, there

25

are two common methods to establish an actual link to the Internet. First, one can use a computer or computer terminal that is directly (and usually permanently) connected to a computer network that is itself directly or indirectly connected to the Internet. Second, one can use a "personal computer" with a "modem" to connect over a telephone line to a larger computer or computer network that is itself directly or indirectly connected to the Internet. As detailed below, both direct and modem connections are made available to people by a wide variety of academic, governmental, or commercial entities.

Students, faculty, researchers, and others affiliated with the vast majority of colleges and universities in the United States can access the Internet through their educational institutions. Such access is often via direct connection using computers located in campus libraries, offices, or computer centers, or may be through telephone access using a modem from a student's or professor's campus or off-campus location. Some colleges and universities install "ports" or outlets for direct network connections in each dormitory room or provide access via computers

located in common areas in dormitories. Such
access enables students and professors to use
information and content provided by the college or
university itself, and to use the vast amount of
5 research resources and other information available
on the Internet worldwide.

Similarly, Internet resources and access
are sufficiently important to many corporations and
10 other employers that those employers link their
office computer networks to the Internet and
provide employees with direct or modem access to
the office network (and thus to the Internet).
Such access might be used by, for example, a
15 corporation involved in scientific or medical
research or manufacturing to enable corporate
employees to exchange information and ideas with
academic researchers in their fields.

20 Those who lack access to the Internet
through their schools or employers still have a
variety of ways they can access the Internet. Many
communities across the country have established
"free-nets" or community networks to provide their
25 citizens with a local link to the Internet (and to
provide local-oriented content and discussion

groups). The first such community network, the Cleveland Free-Net Community Computer System, was established in 1986, and free-nets now exist in scores of communities as diverse as Richmond,
5 Virginia, Tallahassee, Florida, Seattle, Washington, and San Diego, California. Individuals typically can access free-nets at little or no cost via modem connection or by using computers available in community buildings. Free-nets are
10 often operated by a local library, educational institution, or non-profit community group.

Individuals can also access the Internet through many local libraries. Libraries often
15 offer patrons use of computers that are linked to the Internet. In addition, some libraries offer telephone modem access to the libraries' computers, which are themselves connected to the Internet. Increasingly, patrons now use library services and
20 resources without ever physically entering the library itself. Libraries typically provide such direct or modem access at no cost to the individual user.

25 Individuals can also access the Internet by patronizing an increasing number of storefront

"computer coffee shops," where customers -- while they drink their coffee -- can use computers provided by the shop to access the Internet. Such Internet access is typically provided by the shop
5 for a small hourly fee.

Individuals can also access the Internet through commercial and non-commercial "Internet service providers" that typically offer modem
10 telephone access to a computer or computer network linked to the Internet. Many such providers are commercial entities offering Internet access for a monthly or hourly fee. Some Internet service providers, however, are non-profit organizations
15 that offer free or very low cost access to the Internet. For example, the International Internet Association offers free modem access to the Internet upon request. Also, a number of trade or other non-profit associations offer Internet access
20 as a service to members.

Another common way for individuals to access the Internet is through one of the major national commercial "online services" such as
25 America Online, CompuServe, the Microsoft Network, or Prodigy. These online services offer nationwide

computer networks (so that subscribers can dial-in to a local telephone number), and the services provide extensive and well organized content within their own proprietary computer networks. In addition to allowing access to the extensive content available within each online service, the services also allow subscribers to link to the much larger resources of the Internet. Full access to the online service (including access to the Internet) can be obtained for modest monthly or hourly fees. The major commercial online services have almost twelve million individual subscribers across the United States.

In addition to using the national commercial online services, individuals can also access the Internet using some (but not all) of the thousands of local dial-in computer services, often called "bulletin board systems" or "BBSs." With an investment of as little as \$ 2,000.00 and the cost of a telephone line, individuals, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, and businesses can offer their own dial-in computer "bulletin board" service where friends, members, subscribers, or customers can exchange ideas and information. BBSs range from single computers with only one telephone

line into the computer (allowing only one user at a
time), to single computers with many telephone
lines into the computer (allowing multiple
simultaneous users), to multiple linked computers
5 each servicing multiple dial-in telephone lines
(allowing multiple simultaneous users). Some (but
not all) of these BBS systems offer direct or
indirect links to the Internet. Some BBS systems
charge users a nominal fee for access, while many
10 others are free to the individual users.

Although commercial access to the Internet
is growing rapidly, many users of the Internet --
such as college students and staff -- do not
15 individually pay for access (except to the extent,
for example, that the cost of computer services is
a component of college tuition). These and other
Internet users can access the Internet without
paying for such access with a credit card or other
20 form of payment.

Methods to Communicate Over the Internet

Once one has access to the Internet, there
25 are a wide variety of different methods of
communication and information exchange over the

network. These many methods of communication and information retrieval are constantly evolving and are therefore difficult to categorize concisely. The most common methods of communications on the Internet (as well as within the major online services) can be roughly grouped into six categories:

- (1) one-to-one messaging (such as "e-mail"),
- 10 (2) one-to-many messaging (such as "listserv"),
- (3) distributed message databases (such as "USENET newsgroups"),
- (4) real time communication (such as "Internet Relay Chat"),
- 15 (5) real time remote computer utilization (such as "telnet"), (6) remote information retrieval (such as "ftp," "gopher," and the "World Wide Web").

20 Most of these methods of communication can be used to transmit text, data, computer programs, sound, visual images (i.e., pictures), and moving video images.

25 One-to-one messaging. One method of communication on the Internet is via electronic

mail, or "e-mail," comparable in principle to
sending a first class letter. One can address and
transmit a message to one or more other people.
E-mail on the Internet is not routed through a
5 central control point, and can take many and
varying paths to the recipients. Unlike postal
mail, simple e-mail generally is not "sealed" or
secure, and can be accessed or viewed on
intermediate computers between the sender and
10 recipient (unless the message is encrypted).

One-to-many messaging. The Internet also
contains automatic mailing list services (such as
"listservs"), that allow communications about
15 particular subjects of interest to a group of
people. For example, people can subscribe to a
"listserv" mailing list on a particular topic of
interest to them. The subscriber can submit
messages on the topic to the listserv that are
20 forwarded (via e-mail), either automatically or
through a human moderator overseeing the listserv,
to anyone who has subscribed to the mailing list.
A recipient of such a message can reply to the
message and have the reply also distributed to
25 everyone on the mailing list. This service
provides the capability to keep abreast of

developments or events in a particular subject area.

5 Most listserv-type mailing lists automatically forward all incoming messages to all mailing list subscribers. There are thousands of such mailing list services on the Internet, collectively with hundreds of thousands of subscribers. Users of "open" listservs typically can add or remove their names from the mailing list automatically, with no direct human involvement. Listservs may also be "closed," i.e., only allowing for one's acceptance into the listserv by a human moderator.

15 Distributed message databases. Similar in function to listservs -- but quite different in how communications are transmitted -- are distributed message databases such as "USENET newsgroups." User-sponsored newsgroups are among the most popular and widespread applications of Internet services, and cover all imaginable topics of interest to users. Like listservs, newsgroups are open discussions and exchanges on particular topics. Users, however, need not subscribe to the discussion mailing list in advance, but can instead access the database at any time. Some USENET

newsgroups are "moderated" but most are open access. For the moderated newsgroups, n10 all messages to the newsgroup are forwarded to one person who can screen them for relevance to the

5 topics under discussion. USENET newsgroups are disseminated using ad hoc, peer to peer connections between approximately 200,000 computers (called USENET "servers") around the world. For unmoderated newsgroups, when an individual user

10 with access to a USENET server posts a message to a newsgroup, the message is automatically forwarded to all adjacent USENET servers that furnish access to the newsgroup, and it is then propagated to the servers adjacent to those servers, etc. The

15 messages are temporarily stored on each receiving server, where they are available for review and response by individual users. The messages are automatically and periodically purged from each system after a time to make room for new messages.

20 Responses to messages, like the original messages, are automatically distributed to all other computers receiving the newsgroup or forwarded to a moderator in the case of a moderated newsgroup. The dissemination of messages to USENET servers

25 around the world is an automated process that does not require direct human intervention or review.

There are newsgroups on more than fifteen thousand different subjects. In 1994, approximately 70,000 messages were posted to newsgroups each day, and those messages were distributed to the approximately 190,000 computers or computer networks that participate in the USENET newsgroup system. Once the messages reach the approximately 190,000 receiving computers or computer networks, they are available to individual users of those computers or computer networks. Collectively, almost 100,000 new messages (or "articles") are posted to newsgroups each day.

Real time communication. In addition to transmitting messages that can be later read or accessed, individuals on the Internet can engage in an immediate dialog, in "real time", with other people on the Internet. In its simplest forms, "talk" allows one-to-one communications and "Internet Relay Chat" (or IRC) allows two or more to type messages to each other that almost immediately appear on the others' computer screens. IRC is analogous to a telephone party line, using a computer and keyboard rather than a telephone. With IRC, however, at any one time there are

thousands of different party lines available, in which collectively tens of thousands of users are engaging in conversations on a huge range of subjects. Moreover, one can create a new party
5 line to discuss a different topic at any time. Some IRC conversations are "moderated" or include "channel operators."

In addition, commercial online services
10 such as America Online, CompuServe, the Microsoft Network, and Prodigy have their own "chat" systems allowing their members to converse.

Real time remote computer utilization.
15 Another method to use information on the Internet is to access and control remote computers in "real time" using "telnet." For example, using telnet, a researcher at a university would be able to use the computing power of a supercomputer located at a
20 different university. A student can use telnet to connect to a remote library to access the library's online card catalog program.

Remote information retrieval. The final
25 major category of communication may be the most well known use of the Internet -- the search for

and retrieval of information located on remote computers. There are three primary methods to locate and retrieve information on the Internet.

5 A simple method uses "ftp" (or file transfer protocol) to list the names of computer files available on a remote computer, and to transfer one or more of those files to an individual's local computer.

10

Another approach uses a program and format named "gopher" to guide an individual's search through the resources available on a remote computer.

15

The World Wide Web

20 A third approach, and fast becoming the most well-known on the Internet, is the "World Wide Web." The Web utilizes a "hypertext" formatting language called hypertext markup language (HTML), and programs that "browse" the Web can display HTML documents containing text, images, sound, animation
25 and moving video. Any HTML document can include links to other types of information or resources,

so that while viewing an HTML document that, for example, describes resources available on the Internet, one can "click" using a computer mouse on the description of the resource and be immediately
5 connected to the resource itself. Such "hyperlinks" allow information to be accessed and organized in very flexible ways, and allow people to locate and efficiently view related information even if the information is stored on numerous
10 computers all around the world.

Purpose. The World Wide Web (W3C) was created to serve as the platform for a global, online store of knowledge, containing information
15 from a diversity of sources and accessible to Internet users around the world. Though information on the Web is contained in individual computers, the fact that each of these computers is connected to the Internet through W3C protocols
20 allows all of the information to become part of a single body of knowledge. It is currently the most advanced information system developed on the Internet, and embraces within its data model most information in previous networked information
25 systems such as ftp, gopher, wais, and Usenet.

History. W3C was originally developed at CERN, the European Particle Physics Laboratory, and was initially used to allow information sharing within internationally dispersed teams of researchers and engineers. Originally aimed at the High Energy Physics community, it has spread to other areas and attracted much interest in user support, resource recovery, and many other areas which depend on collaborative and information sharing. The Web has extended beyond the scientific and academic community to include communications by individuals, non-profit organizations, and businesses.

Basic Operation. The World Wide Web is a series of documents stored in different computers all over the Internet. Documents contain information stored in a variety of formats, including text, still images, sounds, and video. An essential element of the Web is that any document has an address (rather like a telephone number). Most Web documents contain "links." These are short sections of text or image which refer to another document. Typically the linked text is blue or underlined when displayed, and when selected by the user, the referenced document is

automatically displayed, wherever in the world it actually is stored. Links for example are used to lead from overview documents to more detailed documents, from tables of contents to particular pages, but also as cross-references, footnotes, and new forms of information structure.

Many organizations now have "home pages" on the Web. These are documents which provide a set of links designed to represent the organization, and through links from the home page, guide the user directly or indirectly to information about or relevant to that organization. As an example of the use of links a home page might contain links such as those:

- * THE NATURE OF CYBERSPACE
- * CREATION OF THE INTERNET AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CYBERSPACE
- * HOW PEOPLE ACCESS THE INTERNET
- * METHODS TO COMMUNICATE OVER THE INTERNET

Links may take the user from the original Web site to another Web site on another computer connected to the Internet. These links from one computer to another, from one document to another

across the Internet, are what unify the Web into a single body of knowledge, and what makes the Web unique. The Web was designed with a maximum target time to follow a link of one tenth of a second.

5

Publishing. The World Wide Web exists fundamentally as a platform through which people and organizations can communicate through shared information. When information is made available, it is said to be "published" on the Web. Publishing on the Web simply requires that the "publisher" has a computer connected to the Internet and that the computer is running W3C server software. The computer can be as simple as a small personal computer costing less than \$1500 dollars or as complex as a multi-million dollar mainframe computer. Many Web publishers choose instead to lease disk storage space from someone else who has the necessary computer facilities, eliminating the need for actually owning any equipment oneself.

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The Web, as a universe of network accessible information, contains a variety of documents prepared with quite varying degrees of care, from the hastily typed idea, to the

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professionally executed corporate profile. The power of the Web stems from the ability of a link to point to any document, regardless of its status or physical location.

5

Information to be published on the Web must also be formatted according to the rules of the Web standards. These standardized formats assure that all Web users who want to read the material will be able to view it. Web standards are sophisticated and flexible enough that they have grown to meet the publishing needs of many large corporations, banks, brokerage houses, newspapers and magazines which now publish "online" editions of their material, as well as government agencies, and even courts, which use the Web to disseminate information to the public. At the same time, Web publishing is simple enough that thousands of individual users and small community organizations are using the Web to publish their own personal "home pages," the equivalent of individualized newsletters about that person or organization, which are available to everyone on the Web.

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Web publishers have a choice to make their Web sites open to the general pool of all Internet

users, or close them, thus making the information accessible only to those with advance authorization. Many publishers choose to keep their sites open to all in order to give their
5 information the widest potential audience. In the event that the publishers choose to maintain restrictions on access, this may be accomplished by assigning specific user names and passwords as a prerequisite to access to the site. Or, in the
10 case of Web sites maintained for internal use of one organization, access will only be allowed from other computers within that organization's local network.

15 Searching the Web. A variety of systems have developed that allow users of the Web to search particular information among all of the public sites that are part of the Web. Services such as Yahoo, Magellan, Altavista, Webcrawler, and
20 Lycos are all services known as "search engines" which allow users to search for Web sites that contain certain categories of information, or to search for key words. For example, a Web user looking for the text of Supreme Court opinions
25 would type the words "Supreme Court" into a search engine, and then be presented with a list of World

Wide Web sites that contain Supreme Court information. This list would actually be a series of links to those sites. Having searched out a number of sites that might contain the desired information, the user would then follow individual links, browsing through the information on each site, until the desired material is found. For many content providers on the Web, the ability to be found by these search engines is very important.

10

Common standards. The Web links together disparate information on an ever-growing number of Internet-linked computers by setting common information storage formats (HTML) and a common language for the exchange of Web documents (HTTP). Although the information itself may be in many different formats, and stored on computers which are not otherwise compatible, the basic Web standards provide a basic set of standards which allow communication and exchange of information. Despite the fact that many types of computers are used on the Web, and the fact that many of these machines are otherwise incompatible, those who "publish" information on the Web are able to communicate with those who seek to access

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information with little difficulty because of these basic technical standards.

5 A distributed system with no centralized control. Running on tens of thousands of individual computers on the Internet, the Web is what is known as a distributed system. The Web was designed so that organizations with computers containing information can become part of the Web
10 simply by attaching their computers to the Internet and running appropriate World Wide Web software. No single organization controls any membership in the Web, nor is there any single centralized point from which individual Web sites or services can be
15 blocked from the Web. From a user's perspective, it may appear to be a single, integrated system, but in reality it has no centralized control point.

 Contrast to closed databases. The Web's
20 open, distributed, decentralized nature stands in sharp contrast to most information systems that have come before it. Private information services such as Westlaw, Lexis/Nexis, and Dialog, have contained large storehouses of knowledge, and can
25 be accessed from the Internet with the appropriate passwords and access software. However, these

databases are not linked together into a single whole, as is the World Wide Web.

5 Success of the Web in research, education,
and political activities. The World Wide Web has
become so popular because of its open, distributed,
and easy-to-use nature. Rather than requiring
those who seek information to purchase new software
or hardware, and to learn a new kind of system for
10 each new database of information they seek to
access, the Web environment makes it easy for users
to jump from one set of information to another. By
the same token, the open nature of the Web makes it
easy for publishers to reach their intended
15 audiences without having to know in advance what
kind of computer each potential reader has, and
what kind of software they will be using.

20 The Internet is not exclusively, or even
primarily, a means of commercial communication.
Many commercial entities maintain Web sites to
inform potential consumers about their goods and
services, or to solicit purchases, but many other
Web sites exist solely for the dissemination of
25 non-commercial information. The other forms of
Internet communication -- e-mail, bulletin boards,

5 newsgroups, and chat rooms -- frequently have
non-commercial goals. For the economic and
technical reasons set forth in the following
paragraphs, the Internet is an especially
attractive means for not-for-profit entities or
public interest groups to reach their desired
audiences. Human Rights Watch, Inc., offers
information on its Internet site regarding reported
human rights abuses around the world. National
10 Writers Union provides a forum for writers on
issues of concern to them. Stop Prisoner Rape,
Inc., posts text, graphics, and statistics
regarding the incidence and prevention of rape in
prisons. Critical Path AIDS Project, Inc., offers
15 information on safer sex, the transmission of HIV,
and the treatment of AIDS.

Such diversity of content on the Internet
is possible because the Internet provides an easy
20 and inexpensive way for a speaker to reach a large
audience, potentially of millions. The start-up
and operating costs entailed by communication on
the Internet are significantly lower than those
associated with use of other forms of mass
25 communication, such as television, radio,
newspapers, and magazines. This enables operation

of their own Web sites not only by large companies,
such as Microsoft and Time Warner, but also by
small, not-for-profit groups, such as Stop Prisoner
Rape and Critical Path AIDS Project. Commercial
5 online services such as America Online allow
subscribers to create Web pages free of charge.
Any Internet user can communicate by posting a
message to one of the thousands of newsgroups and
bulletin boards or by engaging in an on-line
10 "chat", and thereby reach an audience worldwide
that shares an interest in a particular topic.

The ease of communication through the
Internet is facilitated by the use of hypertext
15 markup language (HTML), which allows for the
creation of "hyperlinks" or "links". HTML enables
a user to jump from one source to other related
sources by clicking on the link. A link might take
the user from Web site to Web site, or to other
20 files within a particular Web site. Similarly, by
typing a request into a search engine, a user can
retrieve many different sources of content related
to the search that the creators of the engine have
collected.

Through the use of HTML, for example, Critical Path and Stop Prisoner Rape link their Web sites to several related databases, and a user can immediately jump from the home pages of these organizations to the related databases simply by clicking on a link. America Online creates chat rooms for particular discussions but also allows subscribers to create their own chat rooms. Similarly, a newsgroup gathers postings on a particular topic and distributes them to the newsgroup's subscribers. Users of the Carnegie Library can read on-line versions of Vanity Fair and Playboy, and America Online's subscribers can peruse the New York Times, Boating, and other periodicals. Critical Path, Stop Prisoner Rape, America Online and the Carnegie Library all make available content of other speakers over whom they have little or no editorial control.

Because of the different forms of Internet communication, a user of the Internet may speak or listen interchangeably, blurring the distinction between "speakers" and "listeners" on the Internet. Chat rooms, e-mail, and newsgroups are interactive forms of communication, providing the user with the opportunity both to speak and to listen.

5 It follows that unlike traditional media,
the barriers to entry as a speaker on the Internet
do not differ significantly from the barriers to
entry as a listener. Once one has entered
cyberspace, one may engage in the dialogue that
occurs there. In the argot of the medium, the
receiver can and does become the content provider,
and vice-versa. The Internet is therefore a unique
10 and wholly new medium of worldwide human
communication.

 Once a provider posts content on the
Internet, it is available to all other Internet
15 users worldwide. Similarly, once a user posts a
message to a newsgroup or bulletin board, that
message becomes available to all subscribers to
that newsgroup or bulletin board. Once a provider
posts its content on the Internet, it cannot
20 prevent that content from entering any community.
Unlike the newspaper, broadcast station, or cable
system, Internet technology necessarily gives a
speaker a potential worldwide audience. Because
the Internet is a network of networks any network
25 connected to the Internet has the capacity to send
and receive information to any other network.

Hotwired Ventures, for example, cannot prevent its materials on mixology from entering communities that have no interest in that topic.

5 It takes several steps to enter cyberspace.
At the most fundamental level, a user must have access to a computer with the ability to reach the Internet (typically by way of a modem). A user must then direct the computer to connect with the
10 access provider, enter a password, and enter the appropriate commands to find particular data. On the World Wide Web, a user must normally use a search engine or enter an appropriate address. Similarly, accessing newsgroups, bulletin boards,
15 and chat rooms requires several steps.

 Unlike other forms of communication on the Internet, there is technology by which an operator of a World Wide Web server may interrogate a user
20 of a Web site. An HTML document can include a fill-in-the-blank "form" to request information from a visitor to a Web site, and this information can be transmitted back to the Web server and be processed by a computer program, usually a Common
25 Gateway Interface (cgi) script. The Web server could then grant or deny access to the information

sought. The cgi script is the means by which a Web site can process a fill-in form and thereby screen visitors by requesting a credit card number or adult password.

5

A large percentage, perhaps 40% or more, of content on the Internet originates outside the United States. An Internet user could access a Web site of London (which presumably is on a server in England), and then link to other sites of interest in England. A user can sometimes discern from a URL that content is coming from overseas, since InterNIC allows a content provider to imbed a country code in a domain name. Foreign content is otherwise indistinguishable from domestic content (as long as it is in English), since foreign speech is created, named, and posted in the same manner as domestic speech. There is no requirement that foreign speech contain a country code in its URL.

15
20

The use of "caching" makes it difficult to determine whether the material originated from foreign or domestic sources. Because of the high cost of using the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific cables, and because the high demand on those cables leads to bottleneck delays, content is often

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5 "cached", or temporarily stored, on servers in the
United States. Material from a foreign source in
Europe can travel over the trans-Atlantic cable to
the receiver in the United States, and pass through
a domestic caching server which then stores a copy
for subsequent retrieval. This domestic caching
server, rather than the original foreign server,
will send the material from the cache to the
subsequent receivers, without placing a demand on
10 the trans-oceanic cables. This shortcut
effectively eliminates most of the distance for
both the request and the information and, hence,
most of the delay. The caching server discards the
stored information according to its configuration
15 (e.g., after a certain time or as the demand for
the information diminishes). Caching therefore
advances core Internet values: the cheap and speedy
retrieval of information.

20 Caching is not merely an international
phenomenon. Domestic content providers store
popular domestic material on their caching servers
to avoid the delay of successive searches for the
same material and to decrease the demand on their
Internet connection. America Online can cache the
25 home page of the New York Times on its servers when

a subscriber first requests it, so that subsequent subscribers who make the same request will receive the same home page, but from America Online's caching service rather than from the New York Times's server.

FIG. 43 is an illustration of the architecture of the combined internet, POTS, and ADSL architecture for use in the present invention in accordance with a first embodiment. In FIG. 43, to preserve POTS and to prevent a fault in the ADSL equipment 254, 256 from compromising analog voice traffic 226, 296 the voice part of the spectrum (the lowest 4 kHz) is separated from the rest by a passive filter, called a POTS splitter 258, 260. The rest of the available bandwidth -- from about 10 kHz to 1 MHZ -- carries data at rates up to 6 bits per second for every hertz of bandwidth from data equipment 262, 264, 294. The ADSL equipment 256 then has access to a number of destinations including significantly the Internet 268, and other destinations 270, 272.

To exploit the higher frequencies, ADSL makes use of advanced modulation techniques, of which the best known is the discrete multitone (DMT)

technology. As its name implies, ADSL transmits data asymmetrically -- at different rates upstream toward the central office 252 and downstream toward the subscriber 250.

5

Cable television providers are providing analogous Internet service to PC users over their TV cable systems by means of special cable modems. Such modems are capable of transmitting up to 30
10 Mb/s over hybrid fiber/coax systems, which use fiber to bring signals to a neighborhood and coax to distribute it to individual subscribers.

Cable modems come in many forms. Most create a downstream data stream out of one of the 6-MHZ TV
15 channels that occupy spectrum above 50 MHZ (and more likely 550 MHZ) and carve an upstream channel out of the 5-50-MHZ band, which is currently unused. Using 64-state quadrature amplitude modulation (64 QAM), a downstream channel can
20 realistically transmit about 30 Mb/s (the oft-quoted lower speed of 10 Mb/s refers to PC rates associated with Ethernet connections). Upstream rates differ considerably from vendor to vendor, but good hybrid fiber/coax systems can deliver
25 upstream speeds of a few megabits per second.

Thus, like ADSL, cable modems transmit much more information downstream than upstream.

5 The internet architecture 220 and ADSL architecture 354, 356 may also be combined with, for example, user networks 222, 224, and 228. As illustrated in this first embodiment, users may access or use or participate in the administration, management computer assisted
10 program in computer 40 via various different access methods. In this first embodiment, the various databases are only accessible via access to and/or by computer system 40.

15 FIG. 44 is an illustration of the architecture of the combined internet, POTS, and ADSL architecture for use in the present invention in accordance with a second embodiment. As illustrated in this second embodiment, users may
20 access or use or participate in the administration, management computer assisted program in computer 40 via various different access methods. In this second embodiment, some databases (e.g., 87, 88) are only accessible via
25 access to and/or by computer system 40, and other

databases (e.g., 85, 86) are only accessible via access to and/or by internet 220.

FIG. 45 is an illustration of the
5 architecture of the combined internet, POTS, and
ADSL architecture for use in the present invention
in accordance with a third embodiment. As
illustrated in this third embodiment, users may
access or use or participate in the
10 administration, management computer assisted
program in computer 40 via various different
access methods. In this third embodiment, the
databases (e.g., 85, 86, 87 and/or 88) are only
accessible via access to and/or by internet 220.

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FIG. 46 is an illustration of the
architecture of the combined internet, POTS, and
ADSL architecture for use in the present invention
in accordance with a fourth embodiment. As
20 illustrated in this fourth embodiment, users may
access or use or participate in the
administration, management computer assisted
program in computer 40 via various different
access methods. In this fourth embodiment, some
25 databases (e.g., 87, 88) are only accessible via
access to and/or by ADSL system 256 via interface

network 270, and other databases (e.g., 85, 86) are only accessible via access to and/or by internet 220.

5 The above embodiments are only to be construed as examples of the various different types of computer systems that may be utilized in combination with the computer assisted-implemented process of the present invention with wireless
10 devices.

FIG. 47 is a block diagram of an alternative computer system suitable for implementing the invention. At each point-of-sale station, there
15 is a CRT user terminal 201 and associated hard copy terminal 202. The hardware system would include a plurality of these terminals. Each terminal communicates with a central computer 204 through a control unit 203, which controls the
20 point-of-sale terminals, receives purchase orders, redemption orders, and account inquiries from the point-of-sale stations and transmits them to the central computer and receives account verifications, transaction verifications, current
25 market conditions, and responses to customer inquiries regarding account status from the

central computer 204 and transmits them to the appropriate point-of-sale stations.

5 Each control unit could serve up to, for example, approximately 20 point-of-sale stations. The account verifications, transaction verifications, current market conditions, and responses to customer inquiries are transmitted first to the CRT user terminal 201. If the
10 investor requests a written transaction record or a written account status report, the hard copy terminal 202 provides it upon command.

15 The central computer 204 contains storage space for data relating to transactions that are in process; processes all purchase and redemption transactions; performs the update operation; conducts the management information reporting operation and the period-by-period performance
20 monitoring operation; calculates the income generated periodically in each account; and performs the individual record-keeping and reporting operation.

25 The central computer 204 transmits information to and receives information from the

master data files 205 as required in order to
retrieve current and projected market data,
perform the update operation, conduct the
management information reporting operation and
5 the period-by-period performance monitoring
operation, and retrieve the escalation rates
needed to calculate revenues.

The central computer 204 also transmits
10 information to and receives information from the
master account file 206. The central computer
204 also transmits information to and receives
information from the master transaction file 207
in connection with purchase and redemption
15 transactions and in connection with management
information reporting operation. The central
computer 204 also transmits end-of-period
financial statements to the accounting files 208
for storage and retrieves these statements from
20 the accounting files 208 when prompted by the
input/output devices of the central computer 209.

The system manager has a complement of
input/output devices 209. Into the input devices
25 are entered requests for the daily and periodic
reports to the manager, the management

information reports, the period-by-period
investment performance reports, and the
individual reports and instructions for managing
and controlling the hardware system and its
5 software. The output devices are used to obtain
the daily and periodic reports to the manager,
the management information reports, the
period-by-period performance reports, and the
individual reports.

10

FIG. 48 is a block diagram showing a portion
of the computer system of FIG. 47 in more detail.
The exemplary system includes the following types
of devices:

15

<u>Make Model</u>	<u>Item in FIG. 25</u>
IBM 3278 or 3279 or 3179	CRT user terminal 201
IBM 3268	Hard copy terminal 202
IBM 3274	Control unit 203
IBM 4361	central computer 204
IBM 3370-3380	disks 205-208
IBM 3420 or 3480	tape drives 205-208
25 IBM 3179	CRT terminal 209

IBM 3505	card reader 209
IBM 3525	card punch 209
IBM 4245	printer 209

5 It is to be understood that there are a large
number of commercially available substitutes for
each item of hardware which could be combined
into fully compatible systems. Accordingly, the
scope of the invention is not limited by the
10 particularity of the hardware system described
herein.

 The methods which are described herein, are
implemented, for example, on the hardware
15 system(s) described in FIG. 47 (or other suitable
computer system) by embodying the flow-charted
routines into a series of software packages that
substantially follow the sequence of steps in the
flow charts. There are conventional software
20 packages that are commercially available that can
also be adapted to perform one or more of the
steps described herein. Accordingly, as
described below, it would not be necessary in
order to implement the invention to write
25 separate software for each step from scratch.

The Point-of Sale software package marketed by International Business Machines (IBM), for example, is a general interactive data package for point-of-sale applications that can be
5 formatted to provide the precise means of receiving customer orders and inquiries, and transmitting the responses to customer inquiries, and the transaction reports.

10 The Interactive Financial Systems (IFS) library of software packages marketed by IBM, for example, contains a set of general financial and accounting packages that can be adapted and formatted to provide the data base management,
15 accounting, and financial reporting operations required to implement the invention. Part I of IFS contains data base management routines, which can be used to manage the master data files 205, the master account file 206, the master
20 transaction file 207, and the accounting files 208. It also contains routines that can be adapted to handle the account management functions.

25 Part II of IFS contains general routines that cover general ledger maintenance and the

preparation of financial statements and related
schedules. It can be adapted and formatted to
provide the precise means of preparing the daily
transaction summary and summary of current
5 position; the end-of-period investment
performance and position report; the
end-of-period reports to account holders; the
end-of-period statements; and the report to the
manager. Part III of IFS can be adapted to
10 monitor accounts receivable. As an alternative
to the IFS software package, the MSA software
package produced by Management Science of America
can be used.

15 The VSE/SP software package marketed by IBM
contains a complete software package for
operating the hardware system diagramed in FIGs.
25-26. It is possible to write the software
needed to implement each of the other routines in
20 one of the available user languages, such as
FORTRAN, Pascal, C, C++, and the like, by
following the sequence of steps described herein.

Notations and Nomenclature

25 The detailed descriptions which follow may be
presented in terms of program procedures executed

on a computer or network of computers. These
procedural descriptions and representations are
the means used by those skilled in the art to most
effectively convey the substance of their work to
5 others skilled in the art.

A procedure is here, and generally, conceived
to be a self-consistent sequence of steps leading
to a desired result. These steps are those
10 requiring physical manipulations of physical
quantities. Usually, though not necessarily,
these quantities take the form of electrical or
magnetic signals capable of being stored,
transferred, combined, compared and otherwise
15 manipulated. It proves convenient at times,
principally for reasons of common usage, to refer
to these signals as bits, values, elements,
symbols, characters, terms, numbers, or the like.
It should be noted, however, that all of these and
20 similar terms are to be associated with the
appropriate physical quantities and are merely
convenient labels applied to these quantities.

Further, the manipulations performed are
25 often referred to in terms, such as adding or
comparing, which are commonly associated with

mental operations performed by a human operator.
No such capability of a human operator is
necessary, or desirable in most cases, in any of
the operations described herein which form part of
5 the present invention; the operations are machine
operations. Useful machines for performing the
operation of the present invention include general
purpose digital computers or similar devices.

10 The present invention also relates to
apparatus for performing these operations. This
apparatus may be specially constructed for the
required purpose or it may comprise a general
purpose computer as selectively activated or
15 reconfigured by a computer program stored in the
computer. The procedures presented herein are not
inherently related to a particular computer or
other apparatus. Various general purpose machines
may be used with programs written in accordance
20 with the teachings herein, or it may prove more
convenient to construct more specialized apparatus
to perform the required method steps. The
required structure for a variety of these machines
will appear from the description given.

25

5 The many features and advantages of the invention are apparent from the detailed specification, and thus, it is intended by the appended claims to cover all such features and advantages of the invention which fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and variations will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation illustrated and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

15 For example, the specific sequence of the above described process may be altered so that certain processes are conducted in parallel or independent, with other processes, to the extent that the processes are not dependent upon each other. Thus, the specific order of steps described herein are not to be considered implying a specific sequence of steps to perform the above described process. Other alterations or modifications of the above processes are also contemplated. For example, further insubstantial approximations of the above equations are also

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considered within the scope of the processes
described above. One or more, or all of the above
steps may optionally be performed manually. The
above embodiments are only to be construed as
5 examples of the various different types of
computer systems that may be utilized in
connection with the computer assisted-implemented
process for purchasing and provisioning items
over global and/or local networks.

Glossary

Dongle: a small security device that attaches to a computer port to control access to a specific software application. A dongle-protected program will run only when its dongle is attached to the computer.

Piconet: two or more Bluetooth units sharing the same channel-that is, operating in synchronism and following the same hopping sequence.

Profile: a document that describes exactly how different basic protocols and procedures work together in various kinds of Bluetooth devices and applications.

Service discovery protocol (SDP): a procedure used by Bluetooth-enabled devices to determine what services are available from or through other Bluetooth-enabled devices.